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ENGLISH PARTY LEADERS
AND
ENGLISH PARTIES.

ENGLISH PARTY LEADERS

AND

ENGLISH PARTIES.

FROM WALPOLE TO PEEL

INCLUDING A REVIEW OF THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE LAST
ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS.

BY

W. H. DAVENPORT ADAMS,

AUTHOR OF "THE BIRD-WORLD," "THE MEDITERRANEAN," "WOMEN OF FASHION," ETC.

"Statesmen,
Who know the seasons when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet."—*Tennyson*.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

It is, perhaps, hardly too much to say that, to the "general reader," the political history of England during the last century and a half is a "sealed book." He knows, of course, that that eventful period has witnessed many political changes and some great legislative reforms; but of their details, or of the mode in which they have taken place and been carried out, it is safe to assert that he knows little or nothing. The various positions assumed by our two great political parties have never been clearly understood by him; for in our longer histories such topics as these are generally overlaid or obscured by the prominence and fulness given to the narrative of wars and negotiations, social movements and commercial progress. Even in Miss Martineau's "History of the Thirty Years' Peace," the story is told on a scale too large for ordinary readers; and Mr.

Molesworth's interesting volumes deal only with a limited period.

It is hoped, therefore, that the following attempt to present in a popular form, concisely but comprehensively, the leading events of English political history from the days of Queen Anne to those of Queen Victoria, will be found (in advertising phraseology) to "supply a want." After much consideration, I have cast my materials into the shape of biographies; because biographies have always a living and personal interest for the reader, and are more likely to be acceptable to the public at large than a continuous narrative would be. Moreover, in this way it is easier to bring out the influence which our great statesmen have exercised on contemporary opinion, and to indicate the extent to which the country is indebted to their services. It may be alleged as an objection that the biographical form compels me to go over the same ground when two or three of the statesmen with whom my pages are occupied, have come in contact with each other, — that the political life of Pitt, for instance, constantly traverses that of Fox; but this I have endeavoured to meet by the introduction in every such case of additional details.

While I am not without hope that these volumes will be accepted as a sufficiently succinct political

history for ordinary purposes, I am aware that to the student their chief value will be as a trustworthy outline or introduction. And, therefore, I would wish to add that I have done my best to secure accuracy of statement, and have furnished tolerably copious lists of the authorities I have principally consulted. I may not have been able to suppress my own political bias, and I have certainly ventured to say a good word for that Whig party and those Whig principles which seem to me nowadays unjustly neglected; but I have honestly sought to write without temper or prejudice, and to estimate the merits of Sir Robert Peel as fairly as those of Charles James Fox.

W. H. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

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ENGLISH PARTY-LEADERS.

BOOK I.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE,
EARL OF ORFORD.

A.D. 1676-1745.

[*THE Authorities* consulted in the following sketch of the life and administration of Sir Robert Walpole include :—Coxe's *Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole* ; Lord Hervey's *History of the Reign of George the 2nd* ; Horace Walpole's *Letters to Sir Horace Mann* ; Sir C. Hanbury Williams's *Works* ; Tindal's *History of England* ; Bishop Atterbury's *Correspondence* ; Smollett's *History* ; *The Craftsman* ; Pope's *Works* (ed. Elwin). Also : Lord Stanhope's *Reign of Queen Anne* ; Lord Mahon (Earl Stanhope)'s *History of England from the Treaty of Utrecht* ; Macaulay's *Critical and Historical Essays* ; A. C. Ewald's *Sir Robert Walpole: A Political Biography* ; Mrs. Oliphant's *Historical Sketches of the Reign of George the 2nd* ; J. R. Green's *History of the English People* ; T. Wright, *Caricature History of the Georges* ; W. H. Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* ; *Miscellanies, Collected and Edited by Earl Stanhope, etc. etc.*]

Born at Houghton, 1676
 Enters Parliament, 1700
 Secretary at War, 1708
 Treasurer of the Navy, 1709
 Imprisoned in the Tower, 1712
 Chancellor of Exchequer, 1715
 Resigns Office, April, 1717
 Opposes the Peerage Bill, 1719

Paymaster of the Forces, 1720
 First Lord of the Treasury, 1722
 Introduces the Excise Bill, 1733
 War against Spain, 1739
 Resigns Office, 31 Jan., 1742
 Created Earl of Orford, 1742
 Died, March 18th, 1745

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

A.D. 1676-1745.

I.

It was in the reign of Charles the 2nd that the two great political parties, to whom the government of England has been alternately intrusted, assumed cohesion and definiteness. Previously there had been a Court party and an Opposition party; but their sympathies had not been very distinctly marked, except on foreign questions, and when the latter changed places with the former, it not infrequently changed its policy also. But the gradual growth of what we are now accustomed to call constitutional ideas, and the development of a respect for the rights of the people as not inconsistent with a due regard for the prerogatives of the Crown, compelled men to choose their side, and to adopt certain permanent and dominant principles of action. One party took its stand upon the principle of rigid adherence to

the old lines of the constitution ; the other, upon the principle of adapting the constitution to the wants and tendencies of the age. The one put forward its loyalty to the Crown ; the other declared its reverence for the people. The arbitrary government of the Stuarts accentuated the differences between the two parties ; and the Revolution of 1688 rendered their reconciliation or amalgamation impossible. About eight years before that great event, the latter party had come to be known as Whigs, and the former as Tories ; appellations which have survived to the present day, though now giving place to the more intelligible terms of Liberals and Conservatives. At the outset these appellations were intended as nicknames. A ' Whig ' was the *sobriquet* of the Lowland peasantry of Western Scotland ; derived from a word or call they addressed to their horses, or else from a kind of acetous liquor, somewhat resembling sour cream, which they were accustomed to drink. It was afterwards applied to the roving Covenanters, who took up arms against the Crown, upon the murder of Archbishop Sharpe, and were finally defeated at the Battle of Bothwell Bridge (1679). Thence it was fastened as a reproach on politicians who evinced a desire to tolerate Nonconformity, and opposed the despotic measures of the Court. In return, the opposite party were styled ' Tories ',* and were thus likened to the marauding and rebellious Irish outlaws who, as Roman Catholics, harassed the Protestant colony in Ireland. The immediate occasion of the use of these opprobrious de-

* From *Tora, tora*, " give, give."

signations was the reputed discovery of the Meal-tub Plot, contrived by the infamous Dangerfield, in 1679. In the course of the political intrigues which followed, intended to secure the succession of the Duke of Monmouth to the throne, a host of petitions was sent up from the country in favour of the immediate meeting of the Parliament. These were answered by an equal number of addresses declaring 'abhorrence' of the plot against the Crown. The country was thus divided into two great factions of 'petitioners' and 'abhorrrers;' who, before long, were known as 'Whigs' and 'Tories.'

The two names, absurd as was their origin, passed rapidly into general acceptance, and by those who bore them were welcomed as honourable distinctions. It must be admitted, however, that they have ceased, save in a limited degree, to represent the ideas they once represented. Or if we allow that the traditions of the Whig party have undergone no great change, at all events the Tory of Queen Victoria's reign would scarcely call himself a kinsman of the Tory of Queen Anne's. It is doubtful even whether Lord Macaulay's assertion is correct that, though the absolute position of the two parties has been altered, their relative position remains unchanged. "Through the whole of that great movement," says the Whig historian, "which began before those party-names existed, and which will continue after they have become obsolete, through the whole of that great movement of which the Charter of John, the institution of the House of Commons, the extinction of Villenage, the separation from the see of Rome, the

expulsion of the Stuarts, the reform of the Representative system, are successive stages, there have been, under some name or other, two sets of men, those who were before their age, and those who were behind it, those who were the wisest among their contemporaries, and those who gloried in being no wiser than their great-grandfathers." This is brilliantly antithetical, but it is scarcely true, or is certainly ceasing to be true; for now that the great constitutional reforms have been accomplished, now that the principles of civil and religious freedom have been successfully vindicated, the two great parties manifest a certain tendency to approximate to each other. No doubt, there are signs that a new departure will soon take place, and politicians once more array themselves in opposite and hostile camps; but it may safely be predicted that to these the old party-names of Whig and Tory will no longer be applicable.

Meanwhile it is hardly too much to say that Party Government—that is, government in accordance with the will of a majority of the popular branch of the legislature, which is assumed to represent the will of the majority of the people—is the vital element of the British Constitution; and that its existence among us has preserved the nation from despotism on the one hand, and revolution on the other. It has rendered movement and progress possible, while it has prevented that movement and that progress from becoming too violent, from being injudiciously accelerated. It has ensured a careful discussion of every measure of reform,

and prepared the nation to accept it without reluctance. That it has its evils may be conceded; but these are really 'unconsidered trifles' when compared with its advantages. If it did nothing more than preserve the freshness of political life, and fix the attention of the people on legislative action, its profit would be enormous. But that it has succeeded so well among us, that it has remained 'party' and not 'factionous' government, is due to the high character, the commanding intellectual force, and the elevated patriotism of the great Englishmen into whose hands it has fallen. Had our Party-leaders been of a less noble type, Party Government might have proved a failure. It is doubtful whether any nation has produced such a succession of high-minded statesmen as those who have administered the affairs of Great Britain, in office or out of office, since the days of Walpole. They may not always have been blind to the interests of their party, or insensible to the attraction of power and place, but on the whole they have steadily pursued the welfare of England, and to this consideration every other has been subordinated. We propose, therefore, in the following pages to sketch the lives of some of our most eminent Party-leaders, and to place before our readers a summary of the history of Party Government, in the hope that by so doing we may contribute to popularise the study of politics, and revive the recollection of 'men and measures' that ought never to be forgotten.

We begin with Sir ROBERT WALPOLE, whom we take to have been, in the modern sense of the phrase, the first

great Party-leader. There were party politicians before his time—Whig politicians and Tory politicians, a Somers and a Sunderland, a Harley and a Bolingbroke,—but no one man who stood out conspicuously and indisputably as the leader of his party in the House of Commons and its representative in the country.

We acknowledge, however, that the Party Government which he so effectively employed was not his invention. We owe it to Robert, Earl of Sunderland. It was he who advised William the 3rd to recognise and utilise the power acquired by the House of Commons at the Revolution, by selecting his Ministers from the members of the majority in that House. Previously, no 'Ministry', as we now understand the term, had existed. The great officers of State had been the King's servants, and had been responsible only to the King. Now and again, indeed, one among them, like Clarendon or Shaftesbury, had risen above his colleagues by strength of will and power of intellect; but he had never been recognised as officially their superior. If he resigned, his colleagues did not resign with him.* The King appointed or dismissed whomsoever he chose, without reference to the wishes or opinions of the Ministry as a body. But Sunderland saw the necessity for ensuring a representation of the majority in the legislature, and for obtaining a solidarity and a homogeneity of sentiment in the Ministry that would result in united action. The innovation did not seem very important on the surface; but in reality it affected the whole system

* Cabinet responsibility, as distinguished from departmental responsibility, was not fully established for a century later.

of our government. It not only made the administration dependent on the will of Parliament, and through Parliament on the will of the country ; but it arrayed Parliament and country into two great parties, the members of which learned to act under certain leaders, and were bound together by their adhesion to certain well understood principles. The Crown was at once weakened and strengthened by the change. It was compelled to part with some of its most cherished prerogatives, and it lost that power of initiation and control which even William the 3rd to a great extent enjoyed. But it ceased to be responsible to the nation for the acts of the Ministry and was gradually raised above the perils of political strife.

Robert Walpole was the third son of a Norfolk squire of good family but moderate estate. He was born at Houghton on the 26th of August, 1676. His early education he received in a small private school at Massingham. Afterwards he was sent to Eton, where he was distinguished by his love of the classics. It is recorded of him that he was specially partial to Horace, who has always been a favourite with English statesmen. He appears to have displayed considerable oratorical aptitude ; for when his master was informed that several Etonians, and particularly St. John, were distinguished for their eloquence in the House of Commons, he replied, " But I am impatient to hear that Robert Walpole has spoken, for I am convinced that he will be a good orator." In this forecast, however, he was

wrong. Walpole became an effective debater, and a forcible and fluent speaker; but he never possessed the passion and enthusiasm and imagination which are the main elements of the oratorical genius.*

In April, 1696, he entered King's College, Cambridge. There he was seized with small-pox of the most malignant character, and for some time his life was in great danger. His physician, Dr. Brady, scarcely less remarkable for his violent Toryism than for his medical skill, attended him with praiseworthy assiduity, remarking, "We must take care to save this young man, or we shall be accused of having purposely neglected him, because he is so staunch a Whig." He was so delighted with his patient's recovery that he protested, in words Walpole was fond in after life of recalling, that his singular escape was a sure indication of his being reserved for important purposes. The prediction was one which is often made in similar circumstances, but seldom so completely realised as it was in Walpole's instance.

Walpole's elder brothers died while young, and in 1698, becoming heir to the paternal estate, he resigned his scholarship. He had been intended for the church; of which he would hardly have become a shining ornament, though he was wont to say, with characteristic self-reliance, that, had he taken orders, he would have risen to be Archbishop of Canterbury. Secured from the necessity of working for an independence, he gave

* Mr. Lecky observes that Walpole's long ascendancy was not due to any extraordinary brilliancy of eloquence. "He was a clear and forcible reasoner, ready in reply, and peculiarly successful in financial exposition, but he had little or nothing of the temperament or the talent of an orator."

way to the natural indolence of his disposition, and abandoned his literary studies. The future prime minister and most powerful statesman of his age was content to superintend the "improvements" on his father's estate, and sell cattle at the neighbouring markets. His evenings were given up to the riotous festivities in which the English squire was then prone to indulge; and his father was frequently careful to supply him with a double portion of wine. "Come, Robert," he would say, "you shall drink twice while I drink once; for I will not permit the son, in his sober senses, to be witness to the intoxication of his father."

One of the first duties of the heir to a good estate is to marry; and this duty Walpole fulfilled on the 30th of July, 1700, taking to himself as wife, Catherine, daughter of Sir John Shorter, Lord Mayor of London. By the common consent of her contemporaries, she was a woman of considerable personal charms and of unusual intellectual gifts. A few months later, and through the death of his father, Walpole succeeded to the family inheritance, valued at £2000 a year, a fair income in those days of cheap living. He succeeded also to his father's seat as member for Castle Rising, and represented that borough in the two short parliaments which assembled in the closing years of the reign of William the 3rd.

He entered upon parliamentary life with few of those advantages which a succession of cultivated and accomplished statesmen has taught us nowadays to consider almost indispensable to political renown. Macaulay has summed up his deficiencies with his accustomed skill: "He was not," he says, "a brilliant orator. He was

not a wit, like Chesterfield, nor a profound scholar, like Carteret. It may be added that he had not, like Somers, a thorough knowledge of constitutional principles. His literature consisted of some reminiscences of his schooling in Latin and Greek; though he could not have translated Homer, like the late Earl of Derby, or written Latin verses, like Mr. Gladstone. His acquaintance with history was so limited, that in an important debate he showed his ignorance of Empson and Dudley. Then we must own that his manners had acquired under the paternal roof at Houghton, a coarseness and a riotousness which drew attention in a coarse and riotous age. When he ceased to talk of politics, his favourite theme was woman; a theme which he discussed with even more than the license of a Wilkes."

But having said thus much, we have said almost all that requires to be said to his disadvantage. It is more than Coxe has said, but less than Smollett. And, in fact, his faults, however deplorable, were the faults of his time, his breeding, and of the social influences around him, rather than of his natural disposition. He shared them with his contemporaries; whereas his admirable qualities were almost all his own. None of the statesmen of his day were so kind of heart, so tolerant of attack, so generous to forgive; just as none were so keenly alive to the best interests of England, or so convinced of the benefits of a pacific policy. In the hottest hours of debate he alone preserved his equanimity, his coolness, his suavity of temper. Fond of power, he was never arrogant. With tastes which inclined him to extravagance of living, his integrity was unimpeachable. He

never forgot a friend, and he never took advantage of an enemy. And, be it said to his credit, of cruelty he was incapable. It was he, as even his censors admit, who gave to our Government that character of lenity which it has since generally preserved. The lives of his opponents were frequently in his power; but he had no love of blood, and he invariably spared them.

We have said that he was no orator. With few exceptions,* our orators never make any profound or lasting impression on the House of Commons; a practical matter-of-fact body, which always asks for results, and has no attention to spare for mere rhetoric. But Walpole was all that the House best appreciates; a thorough man-of-business; a ready, clear, and intelligent speaker, with a great faculty of exposition; intimately versed in the forms and traditions of the House; and a most methodical administrator. His statesmanship was the perfection of good sense. He had no imagination, and was never troubled with ideals; but his sagacity was never at fault. He was not a man who saw very far, but what he did see he saw most clearly; and if his policy never touched the probabilities of the future, it was always sufficient for the needs of the present. He did not understand, or at least he could not sympathize with any exalted and enthusiastic motives of action; he laughed at them as "schoolboy flights." Self-possessed, utilitarian, good-humoured, he was not a Richelieu or an Alberoni, much less a Strafford; but he was the man above all men fitted to govern England

* Mr. Lecky admits only three exceptions; the two Pitts and Mr. Gladstone.

under the first kings of a new and unpopular dynasty, and at a time when the commercial classes were attaining a novel influence in the State.

Mr. Lecky, in his able and dispassionate review of English History in the Eighteenth Century, does full justice to the merits of the great Minister. "Without," he says, "any remarkable originality of thought or creative genius, he possessed in a high degree one quality of a great statesman—the power of judging new and startling events in the moments of excitement or of panic, as they would be judged by ordinary men when the excitement, the novelty, and the panic had passed." To appreciate his merits we must remember the extraordinary character of the conditions under which he had to act. Throughout the period of his ascendancy the nation was undergoing a silent but absolute transformation; and it is surely to his credit that he recognised this fact, and skilfully adapted his government to the exigencies of each novel situation. He had everything against him. The dynasty was neither loved nor respected; his own policy was misunderstood; the Parliamentary opposition, though numerically weak, was formidable from the talents of its leaders; the chasms between classes were painfully wide; religious prejudices were intensely bitter; and on most great questions his opinions were in advance of those of his contemporaries. Yet how much he accomplished! To quote Mr. Lecky again:—"Finding England with a disputed succession and an unpopular sovereign, with a corrupt and factious Parliament, and an intolerant, ignorant, and warlike people, he succeeded in giving it twenty years of unbroken

peace and uniform prosperity, in establishing on an impregnable basis a dynasty which seemed tottering to its fall, in rendering the House of Commons the most powerful body in the State, in moderating permanently the ferocity of political factions and the intolerance of ecclesiastical legislation. A simple country squire, with neither large fortune nor great connections, he won the highest post in politics from rivals of brilliant talent, and he maintained himself in it for a longer period than any of his predecessors."

The late Sir Robert Peel, who was certainly well-fitted to pronounce judgment in a question of this kind, uses very similar language in reference to Walpole. "There must surely," he says, "have been something very extraordinary in the character and powers of that man who, being the son of a private gentleman, without any advantage from a distinguished name, or services of illustrious ancestors, was Prime Minister of England amid great public difficulties for a period of twenty years,—who, mainly by his personal exertions, contributed to establish and confirm without severity, without bloodshed, a new and unpopular dynasty,—who tolerated no competitor for power,—was emphatically *the Minister* of England,—and who seems to have rebutted the genius of every adversary; having had for his adversaries men of the greatest talents, and of the highest attainments. Of what public man," he continues, "can it be said, with any assurance of certainty that, placed in the situation of Walpole, he would in the course of an administration of twenty years have committed so few errors, and would have left at the close of it the

House of Hanover in equal security, and the finances in equal order?—that he would have secured to England more of the blessings of peace, or would have defeated the machinations of internal enemies with less of vindictive severity, or fewer encroachments on the liberty of the subject?"

He soon gained the respect of the House of Commons. This may have been due at first to his social position, but that he preserved and increased it was due to himself. We find him serving on several committees, and acting as teller on various questions of general as well as party importance. His Whiggish predilections were conspicuous from the outset. He was one of the tellers against the bill proposed by the Tories, in 1701, for the better preservation of the Protestant religion. He stoutly opposed the motion for the impeachment of Lord Somers.* On entering the House he had formed the prudent resolution of not speaking until he had gained some experience; but, according to Coxe, his resolution was overborne by his emulation of St. John, who had been his competitor at Eton. The two differed as widely in character as in politics; the brilliant, versatile, but superficial Bolingbroke being the very antithesis of the sober, judicious, and steady Walpole. But we do not believe that the latter ever thought of rivalling the former in a field where their inequality was manifest;

* The question, "that John Lord Somers by advising His Majesty in the year 1698 to the Treaty for partition of the Spanish monarchy, whereby large territories of the King of Spain's dominions were to be delivered over to France, is guilty of a high crime and misdemeanour," was affirmed by 198 to 188. The impeachment was dismissed by the Lords.

nor can it be found that Walpole at any time aspired to the fame of a great orator. The occasion of his first speech is not known; but it is recorded that, like many other first speeches, it failed to produce a very favourable impression. It was followed by an elaborate and premeditated harangue from an unnamed member, which was greatly admired. Arthur Mainwaring, however, who was present, observed in reply to the criticisms that were freely uttered:—"You may applaud the one and ridicule the other, as much as you please; but depend upon it, that the spruce gentleman who made the set speech will never improve, and that Walpole will in time become an excellent speaker." After a little practice Walpole fulfilled the friendly prediction.

The Parliament of 1702 was a Whig Parliament, led by a Whig ministry, and proceeded with great ardour to pass a series of Whig measures. A bill was passed for attainting the 'Pretender,' the son of James the 2nd, and another for settling the succession of the Crown in the Protestant line. Its debates were interrupted, however, by the death of William the 3rd and the accession of Anne; an event which speedily led to a signal change in the political situation. Anne's favour was given to the Earl of Marlborough; and the Earl, though a Whig as regarded foreign politics, was a Tory at home. His wife, the famous Duchess, the 'Mrs. Freeman' of the royal confidence, was also a Tory; and their combined influence transferred the reins of government from the Whig party to their own. Lord Godolphin, whose eldest son had married Marlborough's eldest daughter, was named Lord Treasurer; and all the great offices of

State were filled with Tory peers and commoners. The new Tory ministry, however, resolved to carry on that war against France and Spain which had been the favourite project of William and his Whig advisers; and Marlborough hastened to the Continent to take command of the British and Allied forces. Then began that comedy of political intrigue, relieved by scenes of victorious warfare, which has given to the reign of Anne so peculiar and great an interest. Its actors were strangely mixed: Marlborough and Godolphin jostling with Harley and St. John, and Mrs. Masham, the bedchamber-woman, with her brother, Jack Hill, helping to obscure and confuse the plot. The clue to unravel it is to be found in the false positions occupied by the two great parties. The Tories were not in earnest in prosecution of the war. It was a Whig war, which had been provoked by the French King's recognition, as sovereign of England, of a prince detested by the Whigs.* It had placed England in a hostile position to the only Continental Power from which the Stuarts could hope to obtain efficient assistance. It had united England in an intimate alliance with the Protestant republic of Holland, whose government the Tories abhorred. Marlborough and Godolphin, therefore, found their most zealous supporters among the Whigs, and naturally were driven by the force of circumstances towards them. In spite of the Queen's Tory

* Mr. Morley somewhat bitterly says that "they dethroned a King by whom their pride had been wounded, and by whom the Anglican clergy had been irritated and alarmed into revolt against their own ecclesiastical principles."

partialities, they called the Whig leaders to their councils. The transformation began as early as 1704, when Lord Nottingham and the Ultra-Tories quitted office, and their places were filled by more moderate Tories, Robert Harley and Henry St. John, who were in favour of the war. In the following year, after the victory of Blenheim, Marlborough ventured to dissolve Parliament. The elections returned a majority such as he had hoped for, and he then made overtures to the Whig leaders. They were accepted; Cowper was made Lord Keeper and Sunderland sent as envoy to Vienna, and the advocates of peace and a French alliance were completely baffled. In the negotiations which led to this result, Walpole, who had been appointed a member of the Admiralty Board, played no unimportant part. By his prudence and administrative ability he had gained Godolphin's confidence; and it was mainly through his advice that the coalition we have described became an accomplished fact.

It has been said that England does not love coalitions; but the truth is, that in a country where government by party is the foundation of the political system, they can never be more than temporary expedients. As the Tory opposition to the war grew more and more vehement, Marlborough was driven to rely more and more upon Whig support, which he rewarded, in 1706, by placing Lord Sunderland, the most Whiggish of the Whigs, in office. The latter immediately set to work to drive even the moderate Tories from the Government, though Marlborough was averse to a proceeding which so completely broke with his old party. But circum-

stances proved too strong for him. The alienation of the Queen, the cabals of Harley and St. John, necessitated a final rupture. In 1708 Harley and St. John were dismissed from their offices, and replaced by Henry Boyle as secretary of state, and Robert Walpole as secretary of war. Lord Somers was appointed to the presidentship of the council, and the triumph of the Whigs was temporarily assured.

Walpole's promotion clearly indicates the important position he had attained in the Whig ranks. The duties of his new office were very delicate and difficult. In Marlborough's absence he transacted the business of the War department personally with the Queen; he corresponded both officially and confidentially with the Commander-in-chief; and his was the onerous task of conciliating the capricious temper (says Coxe) of the Duchess of Marlborough, who interfered in all business, governed her husband with the most absolute sway, and conducted herself towards the Queen with a vehemence which greatly assisted Harley and St. John in their efforts to overthrow the Whig preponderance.

The new Secretary's business habits, his unfailing activity and prudence, his easy and genial manners, his methodical precision, and his genius for finance recommended him to Godolphin's entire confidence. The Treasurer unbosomed to him his most secret councils, committed to him the leadership of the House of Commons, and entrusted him with the duty of composing the speeches from the Throne. In 1710 he was appointed one of the managers of the impeachment of Dr. Sacheverel, rector of St. Saviour's, Southwark, a High Church clergy-

man, who, in a sermon at St. Paul's, had audaciously advocated the doctrine of Non-Resistance. Somers, Eyre, the Solicitor General, and Marlborough strongly disapproved of a measure which, as they foresaw, would result in elevating an obscure divine to the honours of martyrdom, and Walpole urged their views upon Godolphin with his usual acumen. But the Treasurer, inspired, as Macaulay says, with all the zeal of a new-born Whig, and exasperated by the nickname of Volpone which Dr. Sacheverel had borrowed from Ben Jonson's comedy and applied to him, would not be persuaded. The impeachment was brought, and the apprehensions of Somers and Marlborough were realized. The populace sided with Sacheverel, and all the clergy of England made haste to espouse his cause. In all the principal churches prayers were offered up for him as for a persecuted saint, and the drum ecclesiastic was loudly beaten in his favour. The London 'prentices joined in the cry of "High Church and Dr. Sacheverel!" The Queen, after some vacillation, announced herself on the same side. The bold divine was declared guilty.* But his conviction was practically a victory. The sentence pronounced upon him was no punishment. "All this bustle and fatigue," exclaimed Godolphin, "ends in no more but a suspension of three years from the pulpit, and burning his sermons at the old Exchange!" The Treasurer had no right to feel disappointed, for his more prudent colleagues had warned him of the probable result of his injudicious action. "Well might he rue," says Lord Stanhope, "an impeachment so unpopular in its progress

* The vote of the Peers was 69 against 52.

and so ridiculous in its result. Well might he repent his own rashness in overruling the sagacity of Somers, and attempting at any hazard to silence the buzz of a single insignificant priest. The fable of the bear that hurled a heavy stone at the head of its sleeping master on purpose to crush a fly upon his cheek is a type of the service which Godolphin on this occasion rendered to his party." *

* A ballad writer of the time satirizes the Sacheverel craze in some amusing verses (Wilkins's *Political Ballads*, ii. 84):—

These nations had always some token
Of madness, by turns and by fits,
Their senses were shattered and broken,
But now they're quite out of their wits.

Can any man say the Lord Mayor,
Of Parliament likewise a member,—

(This was Sir Samuel Garrard, at whose request the sermon, "On the Perils from False Brethren," was published (a), and to whom it was dedicated),—

Did wisely to set up a bear
To preach on the fifth of November?

Was the Doctor less touched in his brain
To stuff his harangue with gunpowder;
Or Dolben, who fired the train,
And made it crack louder and louder?

(It was John Dolben, son of the Archbishop of York, who moved the impeachment in the Commons, and carried the Bill up to the Lords.)

Even he, who wrought all underhand,
So thinking to save his own bacon;
Some doubt, if for all his white wand,
For a conjurer he ought to be taken.

(a) So Sacheverel asserted; but the Lord Mayor contradicted him.

One good effect it had on Walpole's future career. ✓
It undoubtedly rendered him chary of attacks upon the Church. It showed him how great was the strength of the clerical party, and how weak, comparatively, that of the Dissenters. Hence he was as unwilling, throughout his administration, to meddle in ecclesiastical questions as was the late Lord Melbourne.

The abortive prosecution of Sacheverel brought back

But our Senate hath outdone 'em all,
By their solemn and grave proceeding,
On a pageant in Westminster Hall,
Where the Nation lies almost a-bleeding.

In such a nice and critical state,
When of weighty affairs there were several,
To spend their sweet lungs in debate
About Hoadley and Henry Sacheverel.

(Bishop Hoadley, then simply rector of St. Peter-le-Poor, Broad Street, London, had ably attacked the Passive-Obedience doctrine in his sermons and pamphlets, for which he received the thanks of the House of Commons, and was formally recommended to the Queen for preferment.)

Of the danger that threaten'd the nation,
From the scandalous terms of Volpone,
Thrown on the man of high station,
Who so freely supplies us with money.

So as the rare frolic went round,
It seiz'd at last upon the people;
Who swore they would pull to the ground,
The churches that wanted a steeple.

They rebell'd in the Doctor's defence,
Who so coldly had cried their pow'r down,
And freely gave up their pretence,
To fight for the Church and the Crown.

the Tories to power. It had called forth a manifestation of popular feeling which emboldened the Queen, already prepared for such a measure by the backstairs cabals of Harley and St. John,—the former the most subtle as the latter was the most brilliant of the politicians of the day,—to dismiss the Whig administration, recall the Tories to power, and dissolve Parliament.* The election turned in favour of the new government. The name of Marlborough had lost its power; and the host of pamphleteers whom Harley and St. John employed, reinforced by the genius of Swift, were constantly engaged in misrepresenting the objects of the war and in defaming the character of the disgraced ministers. The High Church party were not less active. They circulated squibs, lampoons, invectives, with an ardour worthy of a better cause.

“Join, Churchmen, join, no longer separate,
Lest you repent it when it is too late.
Low Church is no Church.”

The result of all these efforts was that Treaty of Utrecht, by which, in the view of many, England voluntarily resigned the position to which the genius of Marlborough had raised her;† by which, in the view of

* Sunderland, the Secretary of State, was dismissed in June; Godolphin in August, and the remaining ministers in September.

† The treaty was by no means popular with the country, and supplied the ballad-mongers with abundant material. Here is a verse from “A New Song” :—

“A treaty’s on foot, look about, English boys,
Stop a bad peace as soon as you can;
A peace which our Hanover’s title destroys,
And shakes the high Throne of our glorious Queen Anne.

others, she obtained all the concessions she could reasonably expect. As the head of a mechanical majority, the new government was able to carry everything before it; and negotiations for peace were hurried on with an almost breathless rapidity. The motives which compelled Harley and St. John to adopt this course were many,—but the most powerful seem to have been their desire to humiliate Marlborough, and their anxiety to prepare the way for the return of the Pretender.

The latter, through the failure of the Queen's health,

Over, over, Hanover, over,
 Haste and assist our Queen and our State;
 Haste over, Hanover, fast as you can over,
 Put in your claims, before 'tis too late.

Take also a quotation, from "The Soldiers' Lamentation for the Loss of their General":—

"Let Lewis give the peace we crave,
 'Tis plain we have been beat;
 A greater blow we could not have,
 'Tis high time to retreat,
 For since we're of our head bereft,
 No hopes but in our heels are left."

The following verses are from "Nothing but Truth":—

"This Queen, when she had saved thus
 All Europe from its fate,
 She thought she must save France, too,
 And thought 'twas not too late,
 When to U-trick we did go, did go, did go,
 When to U-trick we did go.

Let no one e'er reproach her,
 That borrow or that gain
 Invited her to Battail,
 For then she gave up Spain,
 When to U-trick we did go, etc.

became the pressing question of the day, and the pivot upon which party politics revolved. The Whigs, bent upon securing the succession of the House of Hanover, defeated the Treaty of Commerce by which Bolingbroke hoped to increase the commercial intercourse of England and France. The Tories, on the other hand, sought to bind the Church to their side by carrying the celebrated Schism Act, which enjoined,—“That no person in Great Britain should keep any public or private school, or act as tutor, that has not first subscribed the declaration to conform to the Church of England, and obtained a licence from the diocesan, and that upon failure of so doing the party may be committed to prison without bail; and that no such licence shall be granted before the party produces a certificate of his having received

She gave up all Europe
 For castles in the air,
 Great Britain for the South Sea,
 And we may all go there,
 If a trading we will go, etc.
 What strange contradictions
 We of late have seen,
 A conquering and a glorious,
 And yet a losing Queen,
 When to U-trick she did go, etc.

So, too, in “The Raree Show” :—

Here be de var vine politicians despatched
 To Paris, to treat of a peace da dar hatched,
 O raree show, etc.
 Here be de congrase at *Utrick*, var nothing is brooded;
 De plenipos meet to do vat is concluded,
 O raree show, etc.

[See W. Walker Wilkins's *Political Ballads* (ed. 1860), vol. ii. pp. 115, 116; 124-130, 131-135, 141, 142.]

WALPOLE IN THE TOWER.

the sacrament, according to the communion of the Church of England, within the last year, and also subscribed the oaths of allegiance and supremacy." It is satisfactory to know that Walpole spoke and voted against this unjust and arbitrary measure. It was carried, however, in both houses; though Harley (now Earl of Oxford) endeavoured to mitigate the more rigorous clauses, and on the final division abstained from recording his vote. Happily, it never came into operation; for on the very day fixed for its commencement the Queen expired. The new Government suspended its execution, and it was afterwards repealed by Lord Stanhope's ministry.

It is significant of Walpole's influential position, and of the opinion of his abilities held by his opponents, that, on the fall of the Godolphin administration, he alone was marked out for persecution. He was accused of venality and corruption in the discharge of his duties as secretary at war; and notwithstanding the vigour and completeness of his defence was condemned by a hostile majority, expelled the House, and committed to the Tower. Regarded as a martyr to the cause of the Whigs, he was visited in his confinement by persons of the highest distinction and ability; by the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, Godolphin, Sunderland, the patriarchal Somers, and the eloquent Pulteney, then his friend, but in later years his bitterest opponent; and his apartment, it is said, exhibited the appearance of a crowded *levée*. While in the Tower he wrote and published 'The Case of Mr. Walpole,' in a letter from a Tory Member of Parliament to his friend in the country,

which forms a sufficient vindication of his character against a paltry and ridiculous accusation. He had no reason to regret his brief captivity, which has not unjustly been called the prelude to his rise,* inasmuch as it not only won for him the sympathy and confidence of his party, but drew towards him the public attention. Thenceforward he was universally regarded as the future leader of the Whigs.

Meanwhile, the political situation every day grew more involved. Harley, pursuing his characteristically tortuous policy, intrigued both with the Electoral Prince of Hanover and the Pretender. St. John, now raised to the peerage as Viscount Bolingbroke, with all the audacity of his splendid genius, embraced the cause of the exiled Stuarts, and pursued his schemes with so much success that he drove Harley from office, assumed the reins of Government, gave Scotland into the hands of the Jacobite Earl of Mar, made the Jacobite Duke of Ormond Warden of the Cinque Ports, and prepared to place James Edward on the throne by force of arms. On their part, the Whigs made ready for the stern arbitrament of the sword, and called upon Marlborough to come over and head them, in the hope that the army would rally round their former chief. The projects of both parties were interrupted by the sudden death of

* Lord Lansdowne, afterwards imprisoned in the same apartment, wrote under Walpole's name, which he had engraved on the window, the following quatrain :—

“ Good unexpected, evil unforeseen,
Appear by turns as fortune shifts the scene ;
Some, rais'd aloft, come tumbling down amain,
And fall so hard, they bound and rise again.”

the Queen. She was stricken with apoplexy on the 30th of July. On receiving intelligence of her danger, the Whig Dukes of Somerset and Argyll burst in upon the Privy Council, without summons, and proposed that the post of Lord Treasurer should be immediately filled. One of the Council * then suggested, and all agreed that the Duke of Shrewsbury, who was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and Lord Chamberlain, should be recommended for it to the dying Queen. The Jacobite ministers, surprised and unready, could offer no opposition; and a deputation, including Shrewsbury himself, waited upon Anne, and submitted what professed to be the unanimous vote of the Council. The Queen, partly conscious but very feeble, faintly acquiesced; and handing the white staff to Shrewsbury, bade him use it for the good of her people. The same afternoon another meeting of the Council was held. The veteran Somers attended, and his presence and his energetic advice infused fresh life into the movements of the Hanoverian party. Four regiments were ordered to London; the guards of the Tower were doubled; a special envoy was sent to Hanover, to request the Elector without delay to repair to Holland, where a British squadron would receive him. The Jacobites, in this supreme moment, lost heart, and were overawed by the energetic measures of the Council. They made no attempt to rise. Atterbury, it is said, incited Bolingbroke to proclaim James the 3rd at Charing-Cross, and undertook to head the procession in his episcopal robes. But Bolingbroke shrank from

* According to Ford, a Government subordinate, the Counsellor who proposed Shrewsbury was Bolingbroke himself.

an enterprise which even his daring soul recognised as hopeless. "There is the best cause in Europe," exclaimed the Bishop, with an oath, "lost for want of spirit!" But no amount of spirit could have compensated for their paucity of numbers. The bulk of the people were in favour of the Protestant succession;* and King George was proclaimed amidst the rejoicings of the multitude, with loud ringing of bells, and crackling of bonfires. "The Earl of Oxford," wrote the defeated Bolingbroke to Swift, "was removed on Tuesday; the Queen died on Sunday. What a world is this, and how does fortune banter us!"

* This seems to have been the case all over the country. Lady Mary Wortley Montague, writing from York, says:—"All the Protestants here seem unanimous for the Protestant succession."

II.

ON the accession of George the 1st the Whig party returned to power and place, which they were fated to enjoy for nearly half a century. Two such eminent authorities as Lord Macaulay and Earl Stanhope are unable to agree on a point of some interest, to which we have already made brief allusion: whether the Whigs of to-day are the real representatives of the Whigs of Walpole's time, whether the former inherit the traditions and principles of the latter. As the continuity of our party history is involved in the question, it may be well to give it a further consideration.*

* On this subject a recent writer, of calm and judicial temperament, may well be heard. Referring to the supposition that the policy of the two great parties has been not merely modified but reversed, he says:—"The main object of the Whig party in the early part of the 18th century was to establish in England a system of government in which the will of the people as expressed by parliament should be supreme, and the power of the monarch should be subject to the limitations it imposed. The substitution of a parliamentary title for Divine right as the basis of the throne, and the assertion of the right of the nation to depose a dynasty which had transcended the limits of the constitution, were the great principles for which the Whigs were contending. . . . The Tory party, on the other hand, was to a great extent, and under George the 1st was almost exclusively, Jacobite. . . . If we enter more into detail there can be no question that the Tory party of the present century has been essentially the party of the landed gentry and of the Established Church, while it has been a main function of the Whigs to watch over the interests of the commercial classes and of the Nonconformists. But these characteristics are just as true of the days of Oxford and Bolingbroke as of those of Eldon and Castlereagh."—W. H. LEcky, 'History of England in the Eighteenth Century,' i. 2, 3.

Macaulay, in looking at the essential characteristics of the Whig and the Tory, saw in each the guardian of a great principle, essential to the welfare of nations. The Whig he describes as, in an especial manner, the guardian of liberty; the Tory as the guardian of order; the Whig as the moving power, the Tory as the steadying power of the State. One is the sail, without which Society would make no progress; the other the ballast, without which the ship would be endangered in a tempest. It may be doubted whether this distinction would be accepted by every Whig or every Tory, and whether, after all, it is not too artificial to be accurate. However this may be, Macaulay contends that during the forty-six years which followed the accession of the House of Hanover, the distinction seemed to be effaced. The Whig was of opinion that the cause of civil and religious freedom was best served by a hearty support of the Protestant dynasty. The Tory hastened to manifest his hatred of revolutions by assailing a government to which a revolution had given birth. Both gradually came to attach more importance to the means than to the end. Both were thrown into "unnatural situations"; and both, in a novel and uncongenial atmosphere, naturally languished and degenerated. The Tory, when not basking in the sunshine of a court, resembled a camel amid the snows of Lapland. The Whig, transported to the unaccustomed smiles of royal favour, was as little at home as a reindeer in the sands of Arabia.

"Dante tells us," continues Macaulay, in a well-known passage, "that he saw, in Malebolge, a strange

encounter between a human form and a serpent.* The enemies, after cruel wounds inflicted, stood for a time glaring on each other. A great cloud surrounded them, and then a wonderful metamorphosis began. Each creature was transfigured into the likeness of its antagonist. The serpent's tail divided itself into two legs; the man's legs intertwined themselves into a tail. The body of the serpent put forth arms; the arms of the man shrunk into his body. At length the serpent stood up a man, and spake; the man sunk down a serpent, and glided hissing away. Something like this was the transformation which, during the reign of George the First, befell the two English parties. Each gradually took the shape and colour of its foe, till at length the Tory rose up erect the zealot of freedom, and the Whig crawled and licked the dust at the feet of power."

* The allusion is to the 25th canto of the 'Inferno.' We quote from Cary's translation:—

..... " They in mutual guise
 So answered, that the serpent split his train
 Divided to a fork, and the pierced spirit
 Drew close his steps together, legs and thighs
 Compacted, that no sign of juncture soon
 Was visible: the tail, disparted, took
 The figure which the spirit lost; its skin
 Softening, his indurated to a rind.
 The shoulders met I mark'd, that entering join'd
 The monster's arm-pits, whose two shorter feet
 So lengthened, as the others dwindling shrunk.
 The feet behind then twisting up became
 That part that man conceals, which in the wretch
 Was cleft in twain."

It is Lord Stanhope's contention that a modern Tory resembles a Whig of Queen Anne's reign, and a Tory of Queen Anne's reign, a modern Whig; which is equivalent to saying that parties have changed their names while preserving their relative attitudes to one another. At the first glance it would seem that Macaulay agrees with him; but the agreement is only temporary. Macaulay allows that a transformation took place during the first half-century of the Hanoverian reigns; but that the Whigs resumed their Whiggism and the Tories their Toryism when George the Third ascended the throne. Otherwise, he admits no more than this, that a modern Tory, owing to the progressive development of his party, *does* bear some resemblance to a Queen Anne Whig; but he denies that the modern Whig is at all like a Queen Anne Tory. We suspect that the great historian is right. It is not possible to conceive of a modern Whig as the defender of Dr. Sacheverel. It is not possible to conceive of a modern Whig as joining in the intrigues of Harley and Mrs. Masham. On the other hand, it is very clear that both the Whigs and Tories of to-day have advanced far beyond the positions occupied by their forefathers, and that this advance has been not on parallel but on converging lines, so as to bring them much nearer to each other than was formerly the case. In all probability the approximation will continue, until Whigs and Tories—or, at least, the more moderate of both parties—shall coalesce. When this fusion is accomplished a new departure will take place; and the old names of Whig and Tory will cease to be appropriate.

The new ministry, which took the direction of affairs on the accession of George the 1st, was emphatically a Whig ministry. It was guided by Lord Townshend, as Secretary of State, and by his brother-in-law, Walpole; who, as we shall see, successively filled the posts of Paymaster of the Forces, of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and First Lord of the Treasury. Mr. Green speaks of the Townshend, or rather the Walpole Administration, as the first of a series of Whig Ministries which ruled England for half a century without any serious opposition; and he remarks that the length of their rule was due partly, no doubt, to an excellent organisation. "While their opponents," he says, "were without influential leaders, and divided by differences of principle,—a charge which is now brought against the Liberal party,—the Whigs adhered unanimously to the principles of the Revolution, and were fortunate in a succession of eminent chiefs. They submitted with a perfection of discipline they have never since exhibited to the guidance of a remarkable group of landed proprietors, to the houses of Bentinck, Manners, Campbell, and Cavendish, to the Fitzroys and Lennoxes, the Russells and Granvilles, families whose steady resistance to the Stuarts, whose share in the Revolution, whose activity and resolution in setting the House of Hanover on the throne, entitled them to that power which they wielded with so much soberness. To gain and preserve an ascendancy in the House of Commons was their great object. They spent their wealth without stint in securing a monopoly of the 'rotten boroughs,' which then formed an important

feature of our parliamentary system. Of the county members, who were the weightier and more energetic part of the House, nine-tenths were for a long time relatives and dependents of the Whig families."

But all this could not have maintained the Whigs in power had they not deserved it. The most dexterous parliamentary arrangements cannot avail against any decided manifestation of the national will. The rule of Walpole and his successors was so prolonged because it met the wants and wishes of the people, and because it was founded upon true and just principles. These may be briefly summed up as Peace abroad, civil and religious liberty at home. The policy which embodied these principles was exactly the policy which, at the epoch we speak of, was essential to the prosperity of England. The country was weary of intestine dissensions, of political convulsions, of the cabals of selfish coteries; it yearned after repose, and this great blessing it obtained under the steadfast rule of the Whig ministers. The commercial classes were beginning to open up new fields of enterprise, and desired peace that they might cultivate them without let or hindrance. So far, perhaps, the nation may have influenced its rulers; but it would be unjust not to admit that the rulers in their turn beneficially influenced the nation.* They accustomed it to habits of

* Macaulay's panegyric of the Queen Anne Whigs is not exaggerated:—"We revere them as the great champions of political and of intellectual liberty. It is true that, when raised to power, they were not exempt from the faults which power naturally engenders. It is true that they were men born in the seventeenth century, and that they were therefore ignorant of many truths which are familiar to the men of the nine-

religious tolerance and civil discipline, to the impartial administration of justice and the unfettered liberty of the press. They taught it to accomplish reform without revolution; and

“Not swift nor slow to change, but firm,”

widened the bounds of freedom by “august decrees” which opened up a long course of wise and prudent legislation, and laid deep and strong the foundation of our national prosperity.*

teenth century. But they were, what the reformers of the Church were before them, and what the reformers of the House of Commons have been since, the leaders of their species in a right direction. It is true that they did not allow to political discussion that latitude which to us appears reasonable and safe; but to them we owe the removal of the censorship. It is true that they did not carry the principle of religious liberty to its full extent; but to them we owe the Toleration Act.”—*Essays, Critical and Historical*, i. 261.

* A word of protest may here be offered against Mr. Morley's sweeping condemnation of the Whig party and its leaders in his “Historical Study” of “Edmund Burke.” “The patrician senators,” he writes, “forgot to continue to hold on the popular mask, and the bugbear of Jacobitism had at length fallen fairly to pieces. The Divine Right of Kings had been fully expanded into the Divine Right of Nobles. The nation saw a select horde of peers wrangling for places and for the public money, devoted to selfish and low-minded intrigues, and perfectly indifferent to the welfare of the State,” (p. 5). One would not wish to appear as the apologist of such men as the Dukes of Newcastle and Bedford, yet it would be unfair to forget that under “the oligarchic system” which Mr. Morley, like the author of “Coningsby,” condemns, the principles of religious tolerance and civil freedom steadily progressed. A party must not be judged by its worst men, nor a system by its occasional failures. The “Venetian oligarchy,” that is, the Whig aristocracy, did a good work in its time; and was surely necessary as a transition from the absolute monarchy of the Stuarts to the aristocratic democracy of the later Guelphs.

^ In the new administration Walpole received at first only the subordinate office of Paymaster of the Forces, without a seat in the Cabinet; but his financial knowledge and his skill as a debater soon placed him in the foremost ranks. He was nominated chairman of the secret committee which examined into the intrigues of Bolingbroke and his adherents, Strafford and Matthew Prior. When his report came before the House, Walpole rose and impeached Bolingbroke of high treason. That versatile and unsteady politician had fled from England, and by his flight confessed his guilt. His friends, therefore, with two exceptions, preserved a discreet silence, and the resolution passed without a division. Then Lord Coningsby stood up, and exclaimed:—"The worthy Chairman of the Committee has impeached the hand, but I impeach the head; he has impeached the clerk, I impeach the master," and immediately impeached Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, of high treason. This was on the 9th of June, 1715; on the 21st, Strafford was also impeached. Ormond, like Bolingbroke, anticipated events by flying to the Continent; and acts of attainder against the two disappointed statesmen were passed without difficulty. The vengeance of the ministry was then concentrated upon Oxford, who was certainly the least deserving of it, for whatever may have been his motives of action, he had thwarted all the projects of the Pretender's friends, and helped largely to secure the peaceable succession of the House of Hanover. Coxe is probably right in his conjecture that, had Queen Anne lived, he would have joined the Whigs. Walpole,

as well as Townshend, strongly maintained that there were no grounds for accusing him of high treason. He was anxious he should be tried only for high crimes and misdemeanors, and warmly opposed the bill of attainder, which was as warmly promoted by the Duke of Marlborough and his party.

In October, 1715, Walpole, who had been rapidly rising in the esteem of the House, was appointed First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, in succession to the Earl of Carlisle, who had been nominated to these offices on the death of the accomplished Halifax. It was well that they had passed into firmer hands; for within a few weeks the country was disturbed by the Jacobite insurrection. How it began, how it was carried on, and how it miserably failed, the historians tell us; but we have to do with it only in so far as it touched the career of Walpole. The leaders of the rebellion, the Earls of Derwentwater, Nithsdale, Wintoun, and Cornwall, Viscount Kenmure, and Lords Widdrington and Nairn, were duly impeached of high treason, and sentence of death was passed upon them. Lord Nairn, it is said, was saved through the interposition of General Stanhope. Great efforts were made on behalf of the rest; so changed was the spirit of party since the days of the Stuarts. The Duchesses of Bolton and Cleveland, and many ladies of illustrious rank, accompanied the young Countess of Derwentwater to the royal presence, and supported her appeal to the King's clemency. Social influences were set to work, and even more ignoble means. Walpole declared in the House of Commons that he had been offered £60,000,

if he would obtain the pardon of Lord Derwentwater. And, for various reasons, some of the loyalest of the Whig supporters of the Government, including gentle-natured Sir Richard Steele, were disposed to favour merciful measures. But Walpole, who knew the full extent of the danger, and the urgent necessity of repressing the spirit of rebellion, was foremost in pressing forward the punishment of the rebel lords. "I am moved with indignation," he exclaimed, "to see that there should be such unworthy members of this great body, who can, without blushing, open their mouths in favour of rebels and parricides, who, far from making the least advance towards deserving favour, by an ingenuous discovery of the bottom of the present horrid conspiracy, have rather aggravated their guilt, both by their sullen silence and prevaricating answers. The Earl of Derwentwater," he continued, "pretended, and affirmed, that he went unprepared, and was drawn unawares into the rebellion; yet, to my knowledge, he had been tampering with several people, to persuade them to rise in favour of the Pretender, six months before he appeared in arms." This line of conduct is so contrary to Walpole's well-known lenity of disposition and generosity of temper, that it was evidently dictated by his conscientious conviction of the necessity of vigorous measures. Yet never perhaps was rebellion more mercifully dealt with! People who take their ideas of history from Smollett may believe that it was quenched in blood; but the records show that only three of the insurgent lords were beheaded, and of the inferior rebels only six-and-twenty suffered

death. Such a death list may appear disagreeably large to us of the latter half of the nineteenth century ; but it dwindles into insignificance when compared with the slaughter that has accompanied the suppression of rebellion in other times and in other countries.

Walpole's indefatigable exertions, and the mental and bodily fatigue which they occasioned, plunged him into a severe illness in the early part of 1716. His recovery was hailed as a subject for general congratulations, and celebrated in numerous halting verses, of which Katherine Rowe's would seem to have been the best. It was during his illness that the famous Septennial Act, for extending the duration of parliaments from three to seven years, was carried through the two Houses of Legislature. But it was well understood that Walpole strongly approved of it, and in after years he consistently and steadily opposed its repeal. Voices are raised at intervals in favour of triennial parliaments, but no prudent statesman will hasten to overthrow a measure which was advocated by Walpole and Somers, and is a security at once against sudden outbreaks of faction and attempts to extend the prerogative of the Crown. Nor is it the less to be valued because it was introduced to serve a temporary purpose ; to postpone a general election, which would otherwise have taken place in 1717, until the country, that is, the landed gentry and the clergy, was less under the influence of a feeling of dislike to the new dynasty. The evils of triennial parliaments are very forcibly indicated by Sir Richard Steele :—"The first year of a Triennial Parliament has been spent in vindictive derision and animosities about the late elec-

tions ; the second session has entered into business, but rather with a spirit of contradiction to what the prevailing set of men in former Parliaments had brought to pass, than of a disinterested zeal for the common good ; the third session has languished in the pursuit of what little was intended to be done in the second ; and the approach of an ensuing election has terrified the members into a servile management, according as their respective principals were disposed towards the question before them in the House. Thus the state of England has been like that of a vessel in distress at sea ; the pilot and mariners have been wholly employed in keeping the ship from sinking ; the act of navigation was useless, and they never pretended to make sail."

During Walpole's illness the Whig party lost its Nestor, the illustrious Lord Somers, of whom it is difficult to speak in terms of undeserved eulogy. He was equally great as a lawyer and a statesman, and his knowledge of jurisprudence was not more remarkable than his love of letters. The son of a Worcester attorney, and born in 1650, his childhood was distinguished by its extraordinary seriousness, just as his manhood was conspicuous for its childlike gentleness and amenity.* Yet these qualities were not natural to him. He was of an impetuous disposition ; and the calmness of his temper was due to a self-control which was never at fault. In 1667 he entered Trinity College,

* "I have hardly known any man," says Swift, "with talents more proper to acquire and preserve the favour of a Prince ; never offending in word or gesture ; in the highest degree courteous and complaisant."

Oxford; but for reasons unknown his studies were abruptly terminated, and he turned his attention to the profession of the law. In May, 1669, he became a Fellow of the Middle Temple, and, being called to the bar in 1676, sprang into immediate renown. His mind was too large, however, to be confined to the details of legal cases, and he threw himself with much ardour into the political contentions of the time. Among the pamphlets which his busy pen produced, two may be mentioned with special approbation: 'A Just and Modest Vindication of the Rights and Privileges of Parliament,' and 'The Security of Englishmen's Lives,' a masterly defence of the institution of grand juries. He found leisure also for literary pursuits; wrote a 'Life of Alcibiades,' and achieved some metrical translations from Ovid. His fame as an advocate procured him the splendid position of counsel for the defence in the memorable trial of the Seven Bishops; and their acquittal was mainly owing to his able arguments. In the councils of the Whigs his advice ever carried great weight; and he co-operated in the movement which placed William of Orange on the throne. In the Convention Parliament of 1689 he represented his native city; and he was a member of the committee which produced the justly celebrated Declaration of Right. Soon afterwards he was made Solicitor-General; in 1692, Attorney-General; in 1693, Lord Keeper. In this last important position he showed himself as equable of intellect as he was urbane in manner. "All contemporary accounts," says Lord Campbell, "concur in praising his industry, his patience, his courteousness, and the uniform serenity of

his temper under every provocation of petulance and of dulness, which is still more trying." In 1697 he was raised to the peerage, and promoted to the Lord Chancellorship; honours which he accepted with some reluctance. Probably he valued them only because they enabled him to encourage and reward men of letters. Thus, the wardership of the Mint, he bestowed upon Newton; John Locke he placed on the Board of Trade; for Addison, the most charming of essayists, he procured an annuity of £300.* When Bayle was oppressed by poverty, and unable to give to the world his 'Historical and Critical Dictionary,' that wonderful monument of indefatigable research and critical acumen, he sent him a message, through a friend, that if he would accept of his patronage for his Dictionary, he had one hundred and fifty guineas at his service.

Neither his public services nor his patronage of literature, his political integrity nor his knowledge of jurisprudence, could shelter him from the adverse winds of unpopularity. In 1701, his enemies were powerful enough to threaten him with an impeachment, chiefly for his share in the Treaty of Ryswick; and King William, even before his trial, was reluctantly compelled to deprive him of the seals. The party jealousies which had directed the attack upon him prevented it, however, from being successful. The impeachment was not pressed; and Somers, in a private position, continued to

* In the letter of thanks which Addison addressed to Somers, he said, "The only return I can make to your Lordship will be to apply myself entirely to my business." He then set out (1699) on a Continental tour, the result of which was his 'Dialogue on Medals.'

devote his surpassing intellectual powers to the service of his country. He supported with all his influence the legislative measure which resulted in the Union of England and Scotland. In 1708, after the retirement of Harley, and the triumph of the Whigs, he was made Lord President of the Council. This office he held for about two years, resigning it in 1710, when his party was again dismissed to the cold shade of opposition. His health, however, was now greatly impaired; and his strong intellect gradually sank into a condition of torpor, with occasional flashes of activity to remind spectators of its former power. At the accession of George the 1st, his infirmities prevented him from accepting the presidency of the council, though his name still lent lustre to the cabinet, and his advice was at times available for the guidance of his colleagues. On the 26th of April, 1716, his honourable career was terminated by a fit of apoplexy.

“In the whole range of our history,” says Earl Stanhope, whose testimony may be the more readily accepted because it is not that of a partisan, “I know not where to find a more upright and unsullied public character than that of Somers. He had contracted nothing of the baseness and venality of his age. He had touched pitch, and was *not* defiled. In the words of Horace Walpole, he was one of those divine men, who, like a chapel in a palace, remain unprofaned, while all the rest is tyranny, corruption, and folly. He had all the knowledge, but none of the pedantry of his profession. He loved the law of England, not as too many seem to love it, for the sake of the dross that defiles it—for the

gibberish which still clings to its language—for the mummeries into which some of its forms have grown. He loved the law of England as the armoury from which, when threatened either by democracy or despotism, we may draw our readiest weapons, and which may prevent recourse to any others. In foreign affairs he was no less deeply skilled, having most attentively studied the balance of power, and the political interests of Europe. As a speaker, his reasoning was close and powerful, his diction flowing and manly. The natural warmth of his temper, which he so successfully mastered in politics, glowed unrestrained in his attachment to his friends; and as no man was ever more deserving of the veneration of posterity, so no one was ever more beloved in private life.” *

The rebellion of the Jacobites having been suppressed, the nation passed into a condition of profound tranquillity. But this tranquillity was not shared by the cabinet, which was called upon to contend with the jealousies of Sunderland, the dissatisfaction of Marlborough, and the ill-humour of Cadogan and Carteret. Even a more serious difficulty was created by the rapacity of the King's German mistresses, as venal as they were ugly, and of his Hanoverian ministers. They looked upon England as a land flowing with milk and honey, of which they had come to take possession, as the Israelites of old took possession of Canaan. So excessive were their demands that Walpole

* Lord Mahon (Earl Stanhope), ‘History of England from the Peace of Utrecht,’ i. 313.

strongly protested against them, but only to draw from the King the sneer, "I suppose you are also paid for your recommendations?" Money did not satisfy them; they wanted rank; the favourites aspired to seats in the House of Lords, and the courtesans would fain have been made peeresses. The Act of Parliament set a barrier to these pretensions as far as England was concerned; but when it was discovered that the provisions of the Act did not extend to Ireland, the Irish establishment was encumbered with shameful pensions, and the Baroness of Schulenberg bloomed out into Duchess of Munster. This advancement, however, failed to satisfy the grasping spirit of the mistress, who cherished a keen resentment against Townshend and Walpole for opposing her desire to be created an English peeress. A similar animosity inflamed all the tribe of secretaries and counsellors, who behaved with so much impertinence towards the leaders of the cabinet, that Walpole, on one occasion, in the royal presence, rebuked a mendacious statement with the sharp and rough reproof, "*Mentiris impudentissime.*"

Towards the end of the year, Townshend and Walpole, disgusted at the King's continental policy, and harassed by constant intrigues, quitted the ministry.* Stanhope became First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Sunderland and Addison† were

* Townshend was dismissed; whereupon Walpole resigned.

† Mr. Morley complains of "the usual insolent thanklessness shown by patricians towards the greater plebeians." Yet surely, Somers, Craggs, Addison, Montague, and even Walpole himself, had no reason to complain of patrician ingratitude.

made secretaries of State.* Both in the House of Commons and in the country Walpole's resignation excited regret and apprehension. He had just introduced a measure for the reduction of the National Debt; and the commercial classes placed an absolute confidence in his financial ability. It is to be noted that in opposition his influence was even greater than when he was in office; and though the ministry reigned, it could hardly be said to govern. One of his bitterest enemies admits that "in all transactions of money affairs, the House relied more upon his judgment than on that of any other member"; and ascribes his ascendancy to "some secret magic of which he seemed to be a perfect master." It was due, of course, to that financial knowledge, which the House is almost always prone to overvalue, to his political consistency, his unfailing courage, and his skill as a debater. We cannot say that his conduct in opposition was always patriotic, and blush to record that he voted against the repeal of the Schism and Occasional Conformity Acts, which his acknowledged principles should have bound him to support. In this he was actuated, probably, by a desire to ingratiate himself with the Church, as well as by his anxiety to embarrass the ministry. Conscious of his great abilities, he longed for power; and directed the most persevering efforts to recover the prestige of his party. It is more to his credit, and it was in conformity to the leniency of his

* In the following year, 1717, Stanhope received an earldom, and as Secretary of State undertook the direction of Foreign Affairs. Sunderland then became First Lord of the Treasury, and Aislabie, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

disposition, that he connived at, if he did not actually consent to, the acquittal of Oxford; while his love of peace prompted him to oppose any measure of the government which seemed likely to plunge England into war. His most eminent service, however, and it was one which amply compensated for occasional factiousness, was his vigorous opposition to the Peerage Bill (suggested, it is said, by Sunderland) introduced in 1719,* which provided that the Crown should at no time be permitted to add more than six to the number of English hereditary peers (178) existing when the bill was passed, though an extinct peerage might be replaced by a new creation, and proposed to substitute twenty-five hereditary for the sixteen representative peers from Scotland. Its alleged motive was to preserve the purity of the peerage; but its effect would have been to convert it into a caste, as well as to render the House of Lords the chief power in the country—at all events, for a time—since it is only by the prerogative the Crown possesses of creating additional peers at will, that the House of Lords can be preserved in harmony with the opinion of the Lower Chamber.†

* The bill was brought into the House of Lords by the Duke of Somerset in 1719, and reached its third reading. In the next session it was re-introduced by the Duke of Buckingham, and after passing the Lords, sent down to the Lower House.—*Sir T. Erskine May*, i. 230.

† Other considerations must not be overlooked:—"The limitations proposed by Stanhope and Sunderland would, indeed, have increased the power and importance of the Lords for a season; but would, most surely, by impairing their utility, have undermined their foundation and produced their downfall. The Peers, shut up in inaccessible dignity, would have learnt to look down on him whom even the highest services could not raise to an equality with themselves, unless by the previous extinction of one of

On the second reading of the bill (December 8th), Walpole addressed the Commons in a speech of great brevity and force. Speaker Onslow records that "he bore down everything before him," and, indeed, the cogency of his arguments was irresistible. The ministry could rally only 177 votes, while Walpole triumphed with 269. A few extracts will give the reader a fair idea of his style and method of debating.* He opened by saying, that "among the Romans, the Temple of Fame was placed behind the Temple of Virtue, to denote that there was no coming to the Temple of Fame but through that of Virtue. But," he continued, "if this bill be passed into a law, one of the most powerful incentives to virtue would be taken away, since there would be no arriving at honour but through the winding-sheet of an old decrepit lord, or the grave of an extinct noble family; a policy very different from that of that glorious and enlightened nation, who made it their pride to hold out to the world illustrious examples of merited elevation.

'Patere honoris scirent ut cuncti viam.'

"It is very far from my thoughts to depreciate the advantages, or detract from the respect due to illustrious

their own number. The aspiring soldier or politician would have lost one great motive for exertion. Even a Nelson could no longer have expected the same honour which had formerly rewarded an Anson or a Hawke."—*Stanhope*. The bill was supported by Addison in his dying effort, a paper called 'The Old Whig'; to which Sir Richard Steele, who had delivered in the House a very able speech against the Bill, replied convincingly under the name of "the Plebeian."

* As reported, this remarkable speech appears to have been compiled from Walpole's own memoranda; but it is necessarily imperfect.

birth; for though the philosopher may say with the poet,

‘Et genus et proavos, et quæ non fecimus ipsi,
Vix ea nostra voco;’

yet the claim derived from that advantage, though pretentious, is so generally and so justly conceded, that every endeavour to subvert the principle would merit contempt and abhorrence.”

This exordium was well calculated to propitiate his hearers. Walpole then addressed himself to the main question :—

“When great alterations in the constitution are to be made, the experiment should be tried for a short time before the proposed change is finally carried into execution, lest it should produce evil instead of good; but in this case, when the bill is once sanctioned by Parliament, there can be no future hopes of redress, because the upper house will always oppose the repeal of an act, which has so considerably increased their power . . .

“The view of the ministry in framing this bill, is plainly nothing but to secure their power in the House of Lords. The principal argument on which the necessity of it is founded, is drawn from the mischief occasioned by the creation of twelve peers during the reign of Queen Anne, for the purpose of carrying an infamous peace through the House of Lords; * that was only a temporary measure, whereas the mischief to be occasioned by this bill will be perpetual. It creates

* To this device Harley resorted in order to secure the assent of the Lords to the Treaty of Utrecht.

thirty-one peers by authority of Parliament; so extraordinary a step cannot be supposed to be taken without some sinister design in future. The ministry want no additional strength in the House of Lords for conducting the common affairs of government, as is sufficiently proved by the unanimity with which they have carried through this bill. If, therefore, they think it necessary to acquire additional strength, it must be done with views and intentions more extravagant and hostile to the constitution than any which have been attempted. The bill itself is of a most insidious and artful nature. The immediate creation of nine Scotch peers, and the reservation of six English peers for a necessary occasion, is of double use; to be ready for the House of Lords if wanted, and to engage three times the number in the House of Commons by hopes and promises . . .

“But the strongest argument against the bill is, that it will not only be a discouragement to virtue and merit, but would endanger our excellent constitution; for as there is a due balance between the three branches of the legislature, it will destroy that balance, and consequently subvert the whole constitution, by causing one of the three powers, which are now dependent on each other, to preponderate in the scale. The Crown is dependent upon the Commons by the power of granting money; the Commons are dependent on the Crown by the power of dissolution; the Lords will now be made independent of both.”

After a decisive exposure of the proposal respecting the Scotch peers, Walpole continued:—

“The present view of the bill is dangerous; the view

to posterity, personal and unpardonable; it will make the Lords masters of the King, according to their own confession, when they admit that a change of administration renders a new creation of peers necessary; for by prohibiting the King from making peers in future, it at the same time precludes him from changing the present administration, who will naturally fill the vacancies with their own creatures; and the new peers will adhere to the first minister with the same zeal and unanimity as those created by Oxford adhered to him.

“It when the Parliament was made septennial, the power of dissolving it before the end of seven years had been wrested from the Crown, would not such an alteration have added immense authority to the Commons? And yet the prerogative of the Crown in dissolving Parliaments, may be, and has been oftener abused, than the power of creating peers.

“But it may be observed, that the King, for his own sake, will rarely make a great number of peers, for they, being usually created by the influence of the first minister, soon become, upon a change of administration, a weight against the Crown; and had Queen Anne lived, the truth of this observation would have been verified in the case of most of the twelve peers made by Oxford. Let me ask, however, is the abuse of any prerogative a sufficient reason for totally annihilating that prerogative? Under that consideration, the power of dissolving Parliaments ought to be taken away, because that power has been more exercised and more abused than any of the other prerogatives; yet, in 1641, when the king had assented to a law that disabled him from proroguing

or dissolving Parliament, without the consent of both Houses, he was from that time under subjection to the Parliament, and from thence followed all the subsequent mischiefs, and his own destruction. It may also be asked, whether the prerogative of making peace and war has never been abused? I might here call to your recollection the peace of Utrecht, and the present war with Spain. Yet who will presume to advise that the power of making war and peace should be taken from the Crown?

“How can the Lords expect the Commons to give their concurrence to a bill by which they and their posterity are to be for ever excluded from the peerage? How would they themselves receive a bill which should prevent a baron from being made a viscount, a viscount an earl, an earl a marquis, and a marquis a duke? Would they consent to limit the number of any rank of peerage? Certainly none; unless, perhaps, the dukes. If the pretence for this measure is, that it will tend to secure the freedom of Parliament, I say that there are many other steps more important and less equivocal, such as the discontinuance of bribes and pensions.

“That this bill will secure the liberty of Parliament, I totally deny; it will secure a great preponderance to the peers; it will form them into a compact impenetrable phalanx by giving them the power to exclude, in all cases of extinction and creation, all such persons from their body, who may be obnoxious to them. In the instances we have seen of their judgment in some late cases, sufficient marks of partiality may be found to put us on our guard against committing to them the power they would derive from

this bill, of judging the right of latent or dormant titles, when their verdict would be of such immense importance. If gentlemen will not be convinced by argument, at least let them not shut their ears to the dreadful example of former times; let them recollect that the overweening disposition of the great barons to aggrandize their own dignity occasioned them to exclude the lesser barons, and to that circumstance may be fairly attributed the sanguinary wars which so long desolated the country." *

It must seem strange to modern readers that after so signal a defeat the Ministry did not resign; but though hopelessly beaten on this particular question, their general relations to the House do not seem to have been affected. Stranger still must it appear that the author of their defeat, within a few months, should accept office under them, and that a subordinate office, the Paymastership of the Forces; and prevail upon Townshend, his former chief, to act as President of the Council. We fear it must be acknowledged that Walpole was animated by a love of power; and such a conclusion it is difficult to resist when we find that, on accepting office, he agreed, if the Peerage Bill were reintroduced, to waive his opposition to the Scotch clauses. This, at least, is the assertion made by Secretary Craggs in a letter to Lord Stanhope, though it is unsupported by any independent evidence. About the same time Walpole, in conjunction with the Duke of Devonshire, effected a reconciliation between the King and the Prince of Wales. Soon afterwards he retired to his seat at Houghton,

* Parl. Hist. vii. 589-594.

taking but little interest in the proceedings of the Government of which he was nominally a member.

His retirement was dictated by motives of the highest political prudence. He saw with alarm the rise and growth of the South Sea Bubble; his prescient eye perceived only too clearly that it would burst speedily and disastrously; and he was determined not to be involved in the disgrace that would then attach to its promoters and favourers. The mania of speculation has seldom fostered a scheme so chimerical, seldom has a nation so readily and so fatally yielded to a monstrous delusion. In vain Walpole raised a warning voice; neither Parliament nor the people would listen, and the wary statesman withdrew from the ruin he could not prevent.

The South Sea Company was established by Harley in 1711, in order to restore the national credit by providing for the floating debts, which then amounted to nearly £10,000,000. These debts represented its capital, the interest on which was secured by making permanent the duties on wine, vinegar, tobacco, and some other articles; and the public creditors were induced to throw their claims into the fund by the promise of a monopoly of the trade to the Spanish coasts in America, which, since the days of Drake and Raleigh, had always exercised a powerful influence on the popular imagination. The Company, sanctioned by royal charter and Act of Parliament, became a reality, and though the promised trade with America proved but a phantom, its resources rapidly increased, and it attained a position of considerable credit.

Towards the close of 1719, this ambitious corpora-

tion, which sought to outrival the Bank of England, made proposals to Ministers to buy up certain public burdens, then amounting to nearly £800,000 a year.* When Ministers referred the proposals to the House of Commons, a desire was expressed that liberty should be given to other companies to compete; and, in consequence, the Bank of England and the South Sea Company bade against one another with reckless extravagance. The latter made a final offer of £7,567,000, which was accepted; and a bill was introduced into Parliament to carry out the scheme. In spite of Walpole's opposition, it passed the Commons by 172 against 55; and in the Lords the minority was only 17, though Lord Cowper compared the Company's project to the Trojan horse, ushered in with much pomp and rejoicing, but contrived for treachery and destruction.† But neither Walpole nor Cowper foresaw all the evil it was doomed to work, while the nation accepted it as the inauguration of a golden era of prosperity.

* "The national debt consisted partly of redeemable funds, which might be paid off whenever money could be found for that purpose. and partly of irredeemable ones, which could not be paid without the consent of the proprietors. The directors of the company proposed, by purchase or subscription, to absorb both kinds of debt, and they anticipated that the advantages they could offer were such that they could make arrangements with the proprietors of the irredeemable annuities for the conversion of these latter into redeemable funds, that they could consolidate the different funds into a single stock, that at the end of seven years they could reduce the interest on the national debt from five to four per cent, and that by the profits of a company so greatly enlarged and so closely connected with the Government, they could establish a large sinking fund for paying off the national debt."—*Lecky*, i. 322.

† The royal assent was given on the 7th of April, 1720.

The shares of the Company rapidly rose from 130 to above 300. Peers and peeresses, country squires, widows with small annuities, tradesmen with small savings, clergy with small benefices, poets like Pope and Gay, and ecclesiastical historians like Bingham, everybody who had little and wanted enough, or who had much and wanted more, entered upon the new race for wealth, and hastened to invest in a Company which chivalrously voted dividends of fifty per cent. and whose £100 stock was selling for £300. From 300 the stocks rose to 1000. The Directors took advantage of the infatuation of the public to treble and even quadruple their capital: and fired with the potentiality of wealth, indulged in the most offensive arrogance. "We have made them kings," exclaimed a politician who had not lost his reason, "and they deal with everybody as such!"

Those now living have seen the fatal tendency of speculation to grow by what it feeds upon. Like some of the polypes, it has a self-multiplying power, and one delusion becomes the parent of a thousand. The South Sea Scheme led to the production of an incredible number of bubble projects, in which Dukes and Earls, and even the Heir Apparent, did not disdain to implicate themselves. Change Alley was as crowded with dupes and dupers as the Rue Quincampoix had been during the fever of John Law's Mississippi madness.* Such was the press within doors that

* "Statesman and patriot ply alike the stocks,
Peeress and butler share alike the box,
And judges job, and bishops bite the town,
And mighty dukes pack cards for half-a-crown."—*Pope*.

tables, with clerks, had to be set up in the streets. Political animosities and sectarian differences were absorbed in the one overmastering passion; Churchmen fraternized with Dissenters, Whigs with Tories; the gentleman of ancient lineage shook hands with the low-born speculator; everybody talked of shares, transfers, subscriptions, and the women loudest of all. Some of the companies started by ingenious knaves were of the most preposterous character.* Thus: "Wrecks to be fished for on the Irish coast—Insurance of Horses and Other Cattle—Insurance of Losses by Servants—To make Salt Water Fresh—For building of Hospitals for Bastard Children—For building of Ships against Pirates—For making of Oil from Sunflower Seed—For improving of Malt Liquors—For recovery of Seamen's Wages—For extracting of Silver from Lead—For the transmuting of Quicksilver into a malleable and fine Metal—For making of Iron with Pit-coal—For importing a Number of large Jack Asses from Spain—For trading in Human Hair—For fattening of Hogs—For a Wheel for a Perpetual Motion"—and, most wonderful of all, "For an Undertaking which shall in due time be Revealed." In this last case, each subscriber paid two guineas on the understanding that he would eventually receive a share of one hundred, when the Undertaking would be disclosed. The bait took; one thousand subscriptions were paid in the

* *The Political State of Great Britain* furnishes, for July, 1720, a list of one hundred and four of these Companies. A sanguine clergyman projected one for the discovery of the land of Ophir.

morning, and in the afternoon the impudent projector decamped.

For a time, all went merry as a marriage bell. But as the bubble companies burst one after another—some of them through the action of the South Sea Directors, who were fain to enjoy a monopoly of speculation—the public took alarm; and the alarm spreading and deepening, everybody grew suddenly desirous of converting his paper into money.* The delusion had run

* The ballad writers and satirists had the wit to foresee the inevitable result of the bubble mania, and as early as the month of August, began to pour upon it their ridicule. The well-known 'South-Sea Ballad; or, Merry Remarks upon Exchange Alley Bubbles,' appeared in September. We quote a verse or two:—

“ In London stands a famous pile,
And near that pile an alley,
Where many crowds for riches toil,
And Wisdom stoops to Folly.
There sad and joyful, high and low,
Court Fortune for her graces;
And as she smiles or frowns, they show
Their gestures and grimaces.

“ There stars and garters do appear,
Among our lords the rabble;
To buy and sell, to see and hear,
The Jews and Gentiles squabble.
There crafty courtiers are too wise
For those who trust to Fortune;
They see the cheat with clearer eyes,
Who peep behind the curtain.

“ Our greatest ladies hither come,
And fly in chariots daily;
Oft pawn their jewels for a sum,
To venture in the Alley.

its usual course. Down went the South Sea Stock; down, and down, and still down; in less than a month it sank from 1000 to 300. Thousands of families were involved in ruin; and a panic of mingled terror and indignation spread through the land. "I perceive," says a contemporary, "the very name of a South Sea man grows abominable in every county." The wrath of the people rose not only against the South Sea Directors, but against the Government, the Royal Family, the King himself. Few even of the leading statesmen of the day had been able to resist the

Young harlots, too, from Drury Lane,
 Approach the 'Change in coaches,
 To fool away the gold they gain,
 By their impure debauches."

Another street-minstrel sings in somewhat similar strain:—

"Change Alley's so thin that a man may now walk,
 And if he'll but listen may hear himself talk,
 For since the suppression of Bubbles in June,
 These clamorous catches are quite out of tune.
 No more of the Hubbles nor Bubbles we see,
 But all the whole nation attacks the South Sea.

"The Salts and the Fisheries likewise are gone.
 All the stock of the Bubbles is swallow'd in one,
 Which (barring the ruin of all other trade)
 Is the cleverest project that ever was made;
 For now the contrivers are tipt with a fee,
 If they douse the subscribers into the South Sea . . .

"'Tis a comical sight to behold the deceit
 Of all ranks of men met each other to cheat,
 To see my Lord Duke make a rout and ado
 In a coffee-house crowd with a politic Jew.
 The most orthodox now-a-days reckon'd is he
 Whose stock is all capital in the South Sea . . ."

temptation. Walpole had speculated to a small extent, but wisely sold out when the stock reached 1000. But, though he speculated, he persisted in uttering his warnings. Lord Sunderland was a considerable loser; so were the Duke of Portland, and Lords Trevor and Lonsdale. The rage of the public was chiefly directed, however, against Sir John Blunt as projector, and Sunderland and Aislalie as heads of the Treasury; as well as against the King's German mistresses and favourites, who had been largely bribed to recommend the nefarious project.

In circumstances such as these the English people, so good-natured in the main, invariably demand a victim; and when Parliament met, there were not wanting men to propose that the directors should, like parricides in ancient Rome, be tied up in sacks, and flung into the Thames.* It was fortunate that Walpole, on whom all eyes were now turned as the future saviour of his

The pencil of the caricaturist was also busy. Several packs of "Bubble Cards" were issued, each card adorned with a humorous illustration of one or other of the Bubble Companies, to which was affixed an epigram in four lines by "the Author of the 'South Sea Ballad.'" Thus, a Company was started for "curing tobacco for snuff," and the card depicts a couple of negroes and their overseer passing the snuff through a sieve, while the dust blinds their eyes. Underneath is the following quatrain:—

"These slaves for snuff are sifting Indian weed,
Whilst their o'erseer does the riddle feed;
The dust arising gives their eyes much trouble,
To show their blindness that espouse the bubble."

A full account of the South Sea Company episode will be found in Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*.

* This was gravely suggested by Lord Molesworth.

country, preserved his calmness. Interposing in an excited and angry debate, he reminded the House that if the city of London were on fire, wise men would endeavour to extinguish the flames before they sought the incendiaries; and he added that he had already bestowed his thoughts on a proposal for retrieving the Public Credit, which, at a fitting season, he would lay before them. Thus he succeeded in checking a vehemence of anger that threatened to degenerate into injustice. His proposed remedy was submitted to the House on the 21st of December. First, he called upon it to decide whether or not the public contracts with the South Sea Company should be preserved inviolate; and this being determined in the affirmative by a large majority, he suggested that nine millions of stock should be thrown upon the Bank of England and the same sum on the East India Company, under certain conditions, leaving twenty millions to the South Sea Company. His measure was ingeniously contrived, and recommended with consummate debating skill. The three Companies, not one of which could profit by it, opposed it strenuously; but it passed both Houses, and it restored the public confidence. Being permissive only, and through various causes being found unnecessary, it was never carried into execution.

Soon afterwards a Committee of Inquiry was appointed, which prosecuted its researches with the utmost ardour, and presented its report as early as the 16th of February, 1721. In the interval Earl Stanhope died, but the report did not implicate him in the scandal. It disclosed, however, a sad scene of corruption; and it

accused Secretary Craggs, his father, the Postmaster-General; Aislalie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer; Charles Stanhope, Secretary of the Treasury; and the Earl of Sunderland.

The last-named was ultimately declared innocent, but the pressure of public indignation compelled him to retire from office.* Aislalie was expelled the House, and committed to the Tower; and a great part of his property was confiscated. Charles Stanhope escaped; a majority of only three deciding in his favour. The Postmaster-General, when the accusation was pressed against him, committed suicide. Secretary Craggs died of small-pox the very day the report was presented, his illness having been aggravated by anxiety of mind. Whether innocent or guilty in this deplorable business, he had in his time rendered some service to the State. He was a man of parts, who combined administrative ability with a warm love of letters; and whatever the record History may preserve of him, he has been assured of immortality through the gratitude of Pope:—

“ A soul, as full of worth as void of pride,
Which nothing seeks to show, or needs to hide;
Which nor to guilt nor fear its caution owes,
And boasts a warmth that from no passion flows.
A face untaught to feign; a judging eye,
That darts severe upon a rising lie,
And strikes a blush through frontless flattery:
All this thou wert; and being this before,
Know, kings and fortune cannot make thee more.

* His death in April, 1722, left Walpole the undisputed leader of the Whig party.

Then scorn to gain a friend by servile ways,
Nor wish to lose a foe these virtues raise;
But candid, free, sincere as you began,
Proceed—a minister, but still a man."

As for the South Sea Directors, Parliament punished them with an almost barbarous severity. They were disqualified from ever sitting in Parliament or holding any office; and their estates, valued at a total of upwards of £2,000,000, were confiscated for the benefit of those who had suffered rather from their own greed and folly than from the knavery or imprudence of the Directors. "Even the small allowance voted to each Director was often embittered," says the historian, "by insult, or diminished by enmity. Sometimes an allowance of one shilling, or of twenty pounds, was jestingly moved. A rough answer of one Director at the Treasury many months before was rancorously quoted against him. Another it seems had been foolish enough to boast that his horses should feed on gold: a facetious member observed that he might now feed on it himself, and should have just as much gold as he could eat, and no more."

Yet Parliament, in the opinion of the people, erred on the side of leniency. The pamphlets of the day, and the petitions poured in upon the House, bear witness to the depth and strength of the national wrath. Condign punishment was asked for "the Cannibals of Change Alley," the "monsters of pride and covetousness," who had infamously betrayed their country. "If you ask," exclaims a writer, "if you ask what, monsters as they are, should be done with them, the

answer is short and easy—Hang them ! for whatever they deserve I would have no new tortures invented, nor any new deaths devised. In this, I think, I show moderation.. Let them only be hanged, but hanged speedily !” In fact, the regret that no one’s blood was shed seems to have been universal.

Walpole’s object, however, was the further restoration of the public credit; and he carried through both Houses a bill by which, of the nine millions and a half due from the South Sea Company to the State, he remitted upwards of five. Eventually the whole was cancelled. The debts of the Company were defrayed from the proceeds of the confiscated estates of its directors. The credit of the bonds was upheld; and a third of the capital was paid to the proprietor. In this way justice was meted out, so far as possible, to all parties; though many were the impoverished families who, for years to come, had deep cause to lament their folly in being dazzled by the South Sea Bubble. That the disaster was not more extensive, and that the national credit was so quickly retrieved, must be ascribed to the prudence, calmness, and financial ability of Walpole, who now stood forward as the most powerful statesman in the kingdom.

III.

THE elections of 1722 returned to Parliament an overwhelming Whig majority, and Walpole entered upon his long lease of power. As Lord Stanhope says, the twenty years of his administration offer but few incidents to the historian's attention. At first, he was virtually unopposed, and the House of Commons existed apparently for the sole purpose of registering his decrees. It is no discredit to him that his rule was thus successful. On the contrary, it is a proof of his sagacity that he appreciated the country's need of prolonged repose. As with all great financial ministers, his chief object was to maintain peace; to prevent the national resources from being expended on fruitless continental wars. "The most pernicious circumstances," he was fond of saying, "in which the country can be are those of war; as we must be losers while it lasts and cannot be great gainers when it ends." To carry out this policy taxed all his ingenuity, for the Court and the Opposition frequently breathed a bellicose spirit. At the same time, he did not advocate peace at any price. No war-loving minister was ever more careful of the honour of England than he was; and we see no reason to doubt that he would have drawn the sword with resolution had he been convinced that the best interests of the country were at stake. But he attained his ends by his diplomatic skill. For instance, he baffled the ambition of

Spain by the most masterly conduct. The Emperor of Germany, Charles the 6th, had no male heir, and aimed at transmitting his hereditary dominions in Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia to his daughter, Maria Theresa. Most of the European Powers hesitated to guarantee a succession which was obviously surrounded with many dangers. But Spain, desirous of recovering Gibraltar and Minorca from England, hastened to waive her own claims and to offer her recognition of the so-called Pragmatic Sanction,* if the Emperor would hand over the Duchies of Tuscany and Parma to Don Carlos, King Philip's second son. As an additional bribe she expressed her willingness to grant exclusive privileges in her American dominions to a trading company which, in spite of the objections of England and Holland, the Emperor had established at Ostend. Simultaneously with this movement, Catherine, the Empress of Russia, having cajoled Sweden into an alliance for the purpose of attacking Denmark, entered into secret negotiations with Spain and Germany. To encounter this formidable confederacy Walpole and his colleague, Townshend, adopted vigorous and well-considered measures, which have received warmer approval at the hands of modern historians than they did at those of his contemporaries. A squadron was ordered into the Baltic to overawe Russia; Sweden was gained over by a subsidy; and in 1725 the Treaty of Hanover bound England, France,

* The imperial ordinance so-called was issued by the Emperor on the 19th of April, 1713, and provided that, in default of male issue, his daughters should succeed him in preference to the daughters of his brother, Joseph the 1st.

and Prussia in an alliance offensive and defensive. Both Chesterfield and Chatham denounced this Treaty, as concluded in the interests of Hanover rather than of England; but it was England and not Hanover that was menaced by the agreement between Russia and Germany. "The proofs of that agreement," as Stanhope remarks, "depending mainly on private and confidential information, could not at the time be divulged, but we, who have good reason to believe in its existence, who know that the two Courts were taking rapid steps to carry it into execution, and that Spain had just made a peremptory demand of Gibraltar from the British government, —must admit the necessity of providing against a dangerous combination, and that Walpole was right in averting the danger, and preserving the peace of England and of Europe, by a counter-alliance."

This counter-alliance lasted two years, and then Prussia withdrew from it. Thereupon Spain laid siege to Gibraltar, but with no result. The army threw a vast quantity of bombs into the place, to the great injury of Spanish finances, but with little damage to the besieged. In four months the investment was raised.* The Imperial ambassador had been recalled from St. James's, and a general war seemed inevitable. But on the death of the Czarina, Russia abandoned the league; Prussia showed little ardour; and the Emperor soon became convinced that the Spanish alliance was worth nothing. In 1729, Spain concluded the Treaty of

* Walpole was severely criticised for not declaring war against Spain when she committed this act of hostility; but his overmastering desire was to keep the peace of Europe, and in this he succeeded.

Seville with England and France, to which Holland afterwards acceded. No reference was made in it to the much-coveted fortress of Gibraltar. Six years later the peace of Europe was further secured by the Treaty of Vienna between England, Austria, Spain, Holland, and France, March, 1731. By this treaty the Emperor obtained the consent of the Maritime Powers to the Pragmatic Sanction, while Spain was gratified by the cession of the two Italian duchies.

— While the Walpole administration thus preserved the honour of England abroad, at home it promoted the growth of trade and commerce. In 1724 the King was able to congratulate the country, with justice, on its enjoyment of external tranquillity and domestic peace, along with all the rights and advantages of civil and religious freedom. This congratulation might have been repeated annually during Walpole's long and brilliant reign. Population increased rapidly; villages grew into towns; Manchester and Birmingham doubled their area, and more than doubled their wealth; Hull rose into importance; and the docks of Bristol were crowded with shipping. A remarkable development of manufacturing industry took place simultaneously with a great development of commerce; and for the first time England began to derive advantage from her colonial enterprise. Liverpool, which owed its creation to the new trade with America, expanded from a quiet country town on the green banks of the Mersey, into the third port in the kingdom, and meditated the construction of a dock on the plan of the docks of Amsterdam. A land secure and at peace is a land well able to devote the

energies of its people to the cultivation of all its resources; and it is not wonderful, therefore, that the value of every gentleman's estate increased threefold; while the entire system of English agriculture was changed by the introduction of rotation of crops, and the cultivation of winter roots and artificial grasses. Trade, commerce, and agriculture were alike encouraged by the rigid economy of Walpole's government. He did not make the large augmentation of the national revenues a pretext for the augmentation of the public expenditure; but every year saw a reduction of the debt and a diminution of taxation.*

As a recent writer points out, Walpole had the sagacity to see that the wisest course a statesman can take in presence of a great increase in national industry and national wealth is "to look quietly on and let it alone." Still, when interference was opportune and advantageous, he did not shrink from attempting it. As early as 1722 he declared, in a speech from the Throne, that nothing would more assuredly promote the extension of commerce than "to make the exportation of our new manufactures, and the importation of the commodities used in the manufacturing of them, as practicable and as easy as may be." In his fiscal policy he anticipated Peel and Gladstone; at the bottom of it lay the great princi-

* "Parsimony of the public money was one of his chief characteristics . . . To this part of his conduct, the Duke of Newcastle bore testimony, at a time when he was censuring his measures in other respects with the greatest asperity. 'As this is a demand of money,' he says, in a letter to Lord Hardwicke, 'we shall find Sir Robert more difficult to comply than upon former occasions.'"—*Coxe*, i. 749.

ple of free trade. One of his earliest ministerial acts was to abolish the duties on upwards of a hundred articles of export and on nearly forty articles of importation. Released from such oppressive fetters, no wonder that Commerce sprang erect like a giant, and "walked to and fro mightily." A pernicious system of monopoly compelled the Colonies to confine all their dealings to the mother-country; Walpole had the wisdom and the prudence, in 1731, to give Georgia and the Carolinas permission to trade with any part of Europe. And if, in 1733, he committed a financial error by appropriating half a million from the Sinking Fund, which he himself had established, to the service of the current year;* he vindicated the breadth and soundness of his financial policy in the same year by the introduction of his Excise Bill.

A singular unpopularity has always befallen the Excise taxes in Great Britain; an unpopularity which, even down to our own time, has extended to the officials employed in collecting them.† The Excise officer in England was as much detested as the gauger in Ireland or Scotland.‡ Originating in the days of the Long

* His opponent Pulteney's sarcasm was well wielded:—"The right honourable gentleman," he said, "had once the vanity to call himself the Father of the Sinking Fund; but if Solomon's judgment was right, he who is thus for splitting and dividing the child can never be deemed to be the real father."

† The reader will compare the allusions in popular songs and ballads with Johnson's definition in his Dictionary:—"Excise: a hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged, not by common judges of property, but by wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid."

‡ The disfavour with which he was regarded is seen in the once celebrated

Parliament, when duties were imposed upon beer, cider, and perry, at the Restoration they yielded an annual revenue of upwards of £600,000. The wars with France necessitated their increase, and in the reign of Queen Anne their average yearly produce rose to nearly

ballad of 'Britannia Excisa, or Britain Excis'd,' which was sung in the streets of London in 1735. The ballad-monger says :—

"Excisemen are oft the bye-blows of the great,
And therefore 'tis meet that they live by the State;
Besides, we all know, they are mighty well bred,
For every one of them can both write and read.
Thus ennobled by blood,
And taught for our good,
This right to rule o'er us can ne'er be withstood;
For sure 'tis unjust, as well as unfit,
We should sell our own goods without their *permit*.

Who would think it a hardship that men so polite
Should enter their houses by day or by night,
To poke in each hole, and examine their stock,
From the cask of right Nantz to their wives' Highland smock?
He's as cross as the devil
Who censures as evil
A visit so courteous, so kind, and so civil;
For to sleep in our beds without their *permit*,
Were, in a free country, a thing most unfit.

When we're absent they'll visit and look to our houses,
Will tutor our daughters and comfort our spouses;
Condescend, at our cost, to eat and to drink,
That our ale mayn't turn sour, or our victuals mayn't stink;
To such a commerce
None can be adverse,
Since every one knows it is better than worse;
Then let us caress them, and show we are wise,
By holding our tongues, and shutting our eyes."

£2,000,000. Owing to the progress of consumption, they had come, without additional duties, to furnish in 1733 a revenue of about £3,200,000. But they were not regarded with less disfavour. The prejudice was shared even by men like Locke, who argued that the whole revenue should be drawn from direct taxes upon the land.* Walpole saw, however, as all great financiers have seen, that the Excise taxes, properly administered, were not necessarily a burden upon the people, fell with tolerable equality on all classes, and might be made to furnish a revenue which would allow of the removal of imposts more onerous, less equitable, and less productive. His aim, therefore, was so to adjust the duties as to set entirely free the essentials of life and the raw materials of manufactures; and so to collect them as to put an end to the fraud and smuggling that everywhere prevailed. For this purpose he proposed to establish bonded warehouses, which would have made London a free port, and greatly increased the trade of England; and to collect the duties from the inland dealers in the shape of Excise and not of Customs. But in this as in other things he was before his time.

\ The Opposition had no sooner learned that a comprehensive measure of Excise was in Walpole's contemplation, than they hastened to prejudice the public mind against it. Pulteney excelled himself in exaggerations.

* Walpole has been censured for reducing the land tax (first imposed under William the 3rd), as a bribe to the landed gentry. But he may well have thought that by so doing he indirectly encouraged agricultural improvement; nor was it a small matter to popularise the new dynasty with so influential a class.

“A very terrible affair,” he exclaimed, “is impending ! A monstrous project ! yea, more monstrous than has ever yet been represented ! It is such a project as has struck terror into the minds of most gentlemen within this House, and of all men without doors, who have any regard to the happiness or to the constitution of their country. I mean that monster, the Excise !” Even “downright Shippen” forgot his customary straightforwardness, and attacked a scheme which had not as yet been promulgated. “It is certain,” he said, “that there are great fears, jealousies, and suspicions without doors, that something is to be attempted in this session of Parliament, which is generally thought to be destructive to the liberties and to the trade of this nation. There is at present a most remarkable and general spirit among the people for protecting and defending their liberties and their trade, in opposition to those attempts which they expect are to be made against both : from all quarters we hear of meetings and resolutions for that purpose ; and this spirit is so general that it cannot be ascribed to any one set of men : they cannot be branded with the name of Jacobites or republicans ; no ; the whole people of England seem to be united in this spirit of jealousy and opposition.”

If such were the case, it was in no small measure due to the artifices of Pulteney and his party, who took care to disseminate through the country rumours as alarming as they were unfounded. They represented it as Walpole's intention to tax every article of consumption ; it was a scheme to pull down, in some mysterious way, our “old and glorious Constitution” (words which have been

so often abused by faction !), and to establish in its place a cruel despotism. The press, always unwisely neglected or not wisely encouraged by the great Minister, was set to work to fan the rising flame ; and the writers in 'The Craftsman' * specially distinguished themselves by the ardour of their eloquence and the rancour of their prejudice. Meetings of electors were held at which resolutions were passed calling upon members to vote against the Excise Laws and their extension, "in any form or on any pretext whatsoever." Such was the excitement of the country when, on the 14th of March, Sir Robert explained his scheme to the House of Commons in a temperate and masterly speech, which occupied, we are told, two hours and a quarter. He began by asserting that he had never conceived such a project as a General Excise ; that his thoughts had been confined solely to the duties on wine and tobacco ; and that it was the information he so frequently received of shameful frauds committed in these two branches, and the complaints of the merchants themselves, that had induced him to desire a remedy for this growing evil. He then explained the way in which he proposed to deal with the tobacco duty, and pointed out that the same method might afterwards be applied to the wine duty. His system of warehousing, for the purpose of re-exportation, would tend, he said, to make London a free port, and consequently, the market of the

* This famous weekly sheet was illuminated by the brilliant invective of Bolingbroke and the caustic satire of Swift. It was started by Bolingbroke and Pulteney as a daily paper in 1726 ; but converted into a weekly in 1727. The editor was Nicholas Amhurst, who assumed the *nom de plume* of Caleb d'Anvers. Amhurst, born 1706, died 1742, was a satirist of some power, and unsurpassed malignity.

world. The increase in the revenue would enable him to abolish the land-tax. He confuted the silly objection to the increase of revenue officers, which fear, interest, and affectation had magnified into a standing army. This standing army, allowing the proposed addition to extend to tobacco and wine, would, according to a careful estimate, not exceed one hundred and twenty-six persons; that number, in addition to those already employed, would do all the duty. Another objection was to the power of officers to enter and search houses; an objection which could not possibly have had any weight without the aid of gross misconception and misrepresentation. All warehouses, cellars, shops, and rooms, and for storing, manufacturing, or selling tobacco would be entered at the Inland Office. But no other part of the house could be searched without a warrant and a constable, and the warrant would not be granted without an affidavit of the cause of suspicion.

Sir Robert, concluded as follows:—

“This is the scheme which has been represented in so dreadful and terrible a light; this is the monster, the many-headed monster, which was to devour the people, and commit such ravages over the whole nation. How justly it has been represented in such a light, I shall leave to this committee, and to the world without doors, to judge. I have said, and will repeat it, that whatever apprehensions and terrors people may have been brought under from a false and malicious representation of what they neither did nor could know or understand, I am fully persuaded, that when they have duly considered the scheme I have now the honour to open to you, they

will view it in another light; and that if it has the good fortune to meet the approbation of Parliament, and comes to take effect, the people will soon feel the happy consequences of it; and when they experience these good effects, they will no longer look on these persons as their friends, who have so grossly imposed on their understandings.

“I look upon it as a most innocent scheme; it can be hurtful to none but smugglers. I am certain it will be of great benefit to the revenue, and will tend to make London a free port, and, by consequence, the market of the world. If I had thought otherwise of it, I would never have ventured to propose it in this place.”

The House was full; and the debate which followed was prolonged until two in the morning. The Prince of Wales was present under the gallery; that Prince Frederick (the father of George the 3rd) to whom we find so many opprobrious allusions in the pamphlets and epigrams of the period. The Opposition brought up all their forces. They were led by Walpole's determined enemy, Pulteney, “the greatest leader of Opposition the House of Commons had ever seen,” who declared that the Minister's scheme reminded him of Sir Ephraim Mammon in Ben Jonson's ‘*Alchemist*,’ who was cheated out of his money by fine promises. He was promised the philosopher's stone, by which he was to get mountains of gold, and anything else he could desire, but all ended at last in some little charm for

curing the itch.* Then followed the impetuous Wyndham, Sir John Barnard (whom Pope has commemorated), Heathcote, and Sir Paul Methuen.† Walpole's principal supporters were the great lawyer, Sir Philip Yorke, afterwards Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, and Sir Joseph Jekyll, Master of the Rolls, characterised by the poet as one

“Who never changed his principle or wig.”

The weight of argument was on the Minister's side, but

* “*Mammon*. Will nought be sav'd that's good for med'cine, think'st thou?

Face. I cannot tell, sir. There will be, perhaps,
Something about the scraping of the shards,
Will cure the itch.”—*Alchemist*, act iv., sc. 3.

† Barnard and Methuen are amusingly characterised in the ballad of ‘The Modern Patriots.’

“Sir John of the City's the next on our card,
Who surely deserves a Patriot's reward;
A man of great honour, who damn'd the Excise,
To hinder the progress of custom-house lies.

That he and his brethren did cry the scheme down
Was meant in great duty, no doubt, to the Crown,
While many a brave brother-trader must twice
Have been forc'd to cheat by this wicked device.

The next is a squire of remarkable note,
Who, during his life, an excise ne'er will vote,
Unless that himself (ay, that's the condition),
All frauds to prevent, be the first in commission.”

Barnard, who came of a Quaker family, was born at Reading in 1685. Thriving as a London citizen, he was returned as member for the city in 1721; chosen alderman in 1728; knighted in 1732; and became Lord Mayor in 1737. He joined the Church of England in 1707. His death took place in 1764.

that of the Opposition was the more popular. This appeared from the clamour of the multitudes who besieged the doors, and to whom in his closing speech Walpole imprudently referred as "sturdy beggars." A phrase which the Opposition immediately caught up, and made good use of ! On a division being taken, 266 voted for the bill, and 205 against it,—a minority very much more formidable than any that Walpole had had previously to contend with. As Sir Robert withdrew to his carriage, his cloak was rudely seized by some of the "sturdy beggars," and he would probably have suffered personal injury if Mr. Pelham had not interposed.

When the Bill came to a second reading, Walpole's majority had decreased to sixteen. Meantime, the excitement out of doors had assumed alarming proportions ; and petitions poured in from all the large towns. \ It became evident that if the bill passed into law, it could not be carried into execution without the aid of an armed force ; and Walpole, in pursuance of his usual policy, resolved on dropping it.* We now know that it was sound in idea and able in detail ; but the populace rejoiced at its abandonment as they might have done at a great victory. In London the Monument was illuminated ; effigies of the Minister were burnt in many places ; and bonfires blazed on all the hills from Dartmoor to Skiddaw. The Minister could not punish the \ people, or the leaders of the Opposition, but he could

* His followers would have had him pass it into law ; but he told them, at a private conference, that it would be impossible to carry the Act into execution without an armed force, and that there would be an end to the liberty of England if supplies had to be raised by the sword.

make his vengeance felt by those who had played him false on his own side. Accordingly, he dismissed the Earl of Chesterfield, Lord Stewart of the Household, a man of equal ability and influence; Lord Clinton, a Lord of the Bedchamber, the Earl of Burlington, the Duke of Montrose, and Lords Marchmont and Stair; while the Duke of Bolton and Lord Cobham were deprived of their colonelcies.

These harsh measures bring us to the consideration of another feature of Walpole's administration; his concentration of power in his own hands. Duchess Sarah of Marlborough said of him that he never liked any but fools, and such as had lost all credit. That a Minister should be supreme in his Cabinet is undoubtedly essential to the firmness and solidarity of his Government; but it is obviously disadvantageous that his colleagues should be mere cyphers, without any freedom of will or independence of action. Walpole seldom called Cabinet councils; and he received and answered despatches of great importance without referring them to his fellow ministers. We fear the charge cannot be denied that, though he made a good use of power, he was too fond of engrossing it. From every point of view this was a mistake. "It is not impossible," as Macaulay says, "that, by taking the course which Pelham afterwards took, and reinforcing his Government with the rising talents and ambition of the Whig party, or admitting occasionally a Tory not unfriendly to the House of Brunswick, he might have prevented the formidable struggle in which the last years of his administration

were passed, and in which he was finally overthrown. It was his insatiable love of power, which every year seemed to increase in intensity, that created the Opposition, and gave it all its strength."

Thus, at the outset of his long ministerial career, he converted one of his warmest and ablest supporters into a determined enemy. This was that William Pulteney, of whom Speaker Onslow said that he knew how to animate every subject of popularity "with the spirit and fire that the orators of the ancient commonwealth governed the people by; was as classical and elegant in the speeches he did not prepare as they were in their most studied compositions, mingling wit and pleasantry, and the application even of little stories, so properly to affect his hearers, that he would upset the best argumentation in the world, and win people to his side often against their own convictions." His eloquence was fresh, clear, incisive; he excelled in classical allusions and epigrammatic illustrations; * and was especially happy in reply.† Sprung from an ancient family, he was educated at Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford; and after the then customary Continental tour, entered Parliament, at the age of 23, in 1705. Attaching himself to the Whig party he soon rose into notice, and formed a close friendship with Walpole, whom he strenuously defended when committed to the Tower on a charge of peculation. On the accession of George the 1st he was made secretary at war, an office which he held

* "How many Martials were in Pulteney lost!"—*Pope*.

† He wrote a fresh and fluent style, as may be seen in his pamphlets; and his political songs (such as "The Honest Jury"), were very clever.

until 1717, when he retired along with Walpole and Townshend. On Walpole's return to power, it might have been expected that he would have recognised the claims of so loyal a supporter and zealous a friend; but impatient of colleagues of such ability and independence, he passed him over, offering him a peerage instead of a seat in the cabinet (1724). The peerage was refused, and soon afterwards Pulteney joined the Opposition, or, as they called themselves, "the Patriots." * Bolingbroke found in him a valuable assistant, and the two conducted with great spirit and success the well-known 'Craftsman.' A slighted friend makes always a bitter foe; and Pulteney pursued Walpole with the patience of a sleuth-hound. His attacks upon the King were scarcely less virulent than those on the Minister, and George the 2nd, with his own hand, struck his name off the list of privy councillors. Not the less did he remain the chief of the Opposition, while his denunciation of

* A designation suggested by Bolingbroke, whose theory was, that a Patriot King should upset all factious combinations by a vigorous use of his prerogative, and that all patriotic politicians should rally round a King who was thus usefully employed. "The King," as Macaulay puts it, "had only to resolve that he would be master, that he would not be held in thralldom by any set of men, that he would take for ministers any persons in whom he had confidence, without distinction of party, and that he would restrain his servants from influencing by immoral means either the constituent bodies or the representative body." Such a theory presupposed in the King, who was to reduce it to practice, a sagacity and an intellectual force which few sovereigns have possessed, while it altogether ignored the rights as well as power of the House of Commons. Notwithstanding the efforts of men like the late Lord Lytton to "write up" Bolingbroke, posterity justly estimates him as a brilliant politician, and an accomplished man of letters, who ignored the true principles of a liberal statesmanship.

corruption, and his loud assertions of patriotic motives, made him one of the most popular men in the country.

Another colleague whom Walpole unwisely transformed into an enemy was John Lord Carteret (afterwards Earl of Granville). He was born in 1690. No one, it has been said, ever combined, in a more eminent degree, the learning of a scholar with the talents of a statesman. He was thoroughly conversant with the Latin and Greek authors, and master of six modern languages. Both in civil and ecclesiastical law he was an undoubted proficient. In debate he was ever warm and fluent; in council, ready, decisive, and full of resource. Chesterfield, who did not love him, said, that when he died, the ablest head in England died too, take it for all in all; and Horace Walpole, when comparing him with his own father, with Chatham, and with Mansfield, admits that he surpassed them in actual genius. But he was too much of an Epicurean to become a great statesman, and his love of wine frequently vanquished his ambition. He was deficient in will, in resolution; his activity was intermittent; and his followers could never depend upon his readiness to lead them. Still, his talents as a debater, his knowledge of foreign affairs, and his popularity made him as valuable as a colleague as he could be formidable as an enemy. It was in the latter capacity, however, that Walpole chose to meet him.

We have already alluded to the Minister's treatment of Sunderland and dismissal of Chesterfield. A word must be given to his relations to Lord Townshend.

Townshend and he were allied both by birth and marriage. They were friends in childhood; at Eton they were schoolfellows; in Norfolk they were neighbours. They served together under Godolphin; they fought together in opposition to Harley and St. John. After the death of Queen Anne they had been recalled together to office. Expelled by Sunderland, they had returned when that able and imperious statesman was finally driven from power. On public affairs their views were almost identical, and even in character and disposition a strong resemblance might be traced between them. But Walpole, who, as his own son confesses, loved power so much that he would not endure a rival,—scarcely even a second,—set aside the recollection of common victories and common struggles, the memory of old acquaintances, and the ties of blood and friendship, when they seemed to clash with his ambition. He was resolved, he said, that the title of the firm should be Walpole and Townshend, not Townshend and Walpole. All the fault, however, was not on the latter side; it must be owned that Townshend's temper was violent, and his greed of influence scarcely inferior to Walpole's. While Lady Townshend (Walpole's sister) lived, their frequent bickerings were composed by her mediation. After her death they increased in number and violence; and in 1730, on a difference of opinion arising between them in reference to a question of foreign policy, an open rupture occurred.

“The decisive quarrel,” says Stanhope, “took place at the house of Colonel Selwyn, in Cleveland Square. Foreign affairs being discussed, and Townshend pre-

suming to differ with Walpole, Sir Robert grew so incensed as to declare that he did not believe what the other was saying! Townshend, losing all patience, raised his hand, and these old friends, near relations, and brother ministers, seized one another by the collar, and grasped their swords. Mrs. Selwyn shrieked for assistance; the men interposed and dissuaded them from going out, as they wished, to fight an immediate duel. But though the encounter was prevented, the friendship could never be restored."

^ Townshend resigned in May. Faithful to his principles, however, he refused to join the Opposition, as Pulteney and Carteret had done, and wholly withdrew from public life. His remaining years (he died in 1738) were devoted to agricultural pursuits; and it is to his retirement from office that we owe the introduction into England of that valuable esculent, the turnip. When pressed to attend an important debate in the House of Lords, he told Chesterfield:—"I have irrevocably determined no more to engage in politics; I recollect that Lord Cowper, though a staunch Whig, was betrayed by personal pique and party resentment to throw himself into the arms of the Tories, and even to support principles which tended to serve the Jacobites. I know that I am extremely warm, and I am apprehensive that, if I should attend the House of Lords, I may be hurried away by my temper, and my personal animosities, to adopt a line of conduct which in my cooler moments I may regret."

It has been objected to Walpole that he was no patron

of literature, and in this respect he seems to contrast unfavourably with some of his contemporaries, such as Halifax, Harley, and Bolingbroke. We fear it must be conceded that he was emphatically a man of action, and that he had no love of letters, and little consideration for literary men. But we do not consider it to have been a political error that he withdrew the patronage which former ministers had conferred. Men used to official life, and accustomed to its traditions and precedents, make the best officials; and Walpole was quite right in not employing men of letters for what men of letters cannot do well. Prior was not a good ambassador because he was a tolerable poet; nor did Addison make a good secretary of state because he had written the 'Dialogues on Medals.' Let us take Lord Stanhope's rose-coloured view of the position. During the reigns of William, of Anne, and of George the 1st, until Walpole became Prime Minister in 1722, Whigs and Tories rivalled each other in the encouragement of learned and literary men. "Whenever," he says, "a writer showed signs of genius, either party to which his principles might incline him, was eager to hail him as a friend. The most distinguished society and the most favourable opportunities were thrown open to him. Places and pensions were lavishly bestowed; those who wished only to pursue their studies had the means afforded them for learned leisure, while more ambitious spirits were pushed forward in Parliament or in diplomacy. In short," says the historian, "though the sovereign was never an Augustus, almost every minister was a Mæcenas." This we grant; but in most cases he was a Mæcenas at the

expense of the nation ! Places and pensions may be very desirable rewards for literary men, but their bestowal augurs no great individual generosity. "The Lord Treasurer Oxford," as Stanhope says, "when Parnell first came to Court, passed through the crowd of nobles, leaving them all unnoticed, to give a cordial welcome to the poet." But, then, that was all he *did* give ! And it must be remembered that the patronage so glowingly described was bestowed, after all, for political services rendered quite as much as for admirable literary performance. It was Swift's unscrupulous partisanship that procured him his deanery. It was Addison's poem of 'The Campaign' that led to his preferment. Ambrose Philips and Hughes, and Gay and Stepney worked hard for the recompense they obtained, and of three of these it can hardly be said that their poetical merits were worthy either of place or pension.

Earl Stanhope draws a very painful picture of the condition of men of letters during Walpole's administration ; he speaks of it as to them a bleak and barren winter. With unusual exaggeration he assumes that the Minister regarded books as fit only for idle and useless men ; and that their writers, therefore, he left to dig, to beg, to starve. The truth is, that the condition of the mass of writers was no worse under Walpole than it had been under Harley. In Harley's time as in Walpole's the crowd of obscure penmen were frequently reduced to the greatest privations. The proportion of authors, as is often the case when literature receives a new impulse, was in excess of that of readers. Preferments and pensions could not be found for all. Lord Stanhope

refers to Richard Savage, but why should Savage have had a pension? It is affecting to read of half-starved poets; but these poets were sorry rhymesters, and we do not know that the State is bound to offer a premium for bad verse.

Then, again, the more popular and influential writers of the day belonged to the Opposition. Earl Stanhope affects surprise that Walpole made no effort to buy the support of Dean Swift. But the Minister, with his bluff honesty, may have thought the support worth little which could be purchased by an offer of advancement. Swift had satirised him bitterly; yet Walpole, when he visited England in 1726, received him civilly, and asked him to dinner. Why should he have done more? Or why should he have rewarded Gay, who always lampooned him, who libelled him as 'Bob Booty,' in his 'Beggars' Opera' (1727), and heaped upon him the coarsest abuse in 'Polly,' the sequel to it (1728)? Walpole had little cause to love the writers of the day. Instigated by Bolingbroke, Pulteney, and Chesterfield, they assailed him with the most scandalous invectives, which he bore however with his usual good-humoured composure. His only revenge was to revive the Playhouse Act (in 1737), an Act absolutely necessary to check the licentiousness of the stage. It conferred that power of control on the Lord Chamberlain, which, on the whole, has been exercised with so much discretion and so greatly to the public advantage. Otherwise, if Walpole did not love literature he did not persecute it. He smiled with indifference while a swarm of angry

pamphleteers and ballad-mongers buzzed about him.* He withheld from them the booty they coveted, but then he did not inflict upon them fines or imprisonment. And eventually the republic of letters was none the worse—rather let us say much the better—for being taught to dispense with the selfish patronage of the Ministers, and accustomed to rely on the disinterested patronage of the public.

The last charge against Walpole which requires to be noticed, is his practice of corruption. It is stated very strongly by Mr. Lecky:—"It was left to Walpole to organise corruption as a system, and make it the normal process of Parliamentary Government." True, he goes on to adduce some justification, or, at least, excuse for the practice. He alleges that it was scarcely possible to manage Parliament without it. "During the century," says Macaulay, "which followed the Restoration, the House of Commons was in that situation in which assemblies must be managed by corruption or cannot be managed at all. It was not held in awe, as of old, by the throne, or, as now by the people. Its power was immense, its constitution oligarchical, and its deliberations were secret. The Government had every conceivable motive to offer bribes; and most of the members, if they were not men of high honour and probity, had little motive for refusing what Government offered." Here, as it

* This is admitted even in the violent ballad of "The Norfolk Gamester":—

"Their language opprobrious he calmly did take,
Rememb'ring the proverb that 'losers will speak';
His temper was even, unruffled his mind,
To passion their taunts could not make him inclin'd."

seems to us, the historian enters into an ingenious explanation of a fact which has not been proved ! The only evidence in support of this oft-repeated charge of corruption—a charge which everybody can bring—is the calumnious writings of Bolingbroke and his army of pamphleteers. We deny that it was necessary for Walpole to resort to bribery. He was one of the strongest Ministers the country has ever seen. During the first years of his Government the Opposition was contemptibly weak ; and when it grew strong, he could rely on the support of the Crown and of the commercial and manufacturing classes. Moreover, for many years he was the one independent statesman whom the nation could not afford to get rid of. Crown and people trusted in his financial ability, his political sagacity, his administrative skill, as they could not trust in the unsteady genius of Carteret, or the sparkling declamation of Pulteney. The twenty years that followed his fall did but justify this estimate of the great Minister. It was only when a generation arose that did not understand the value of his services, a generation that was blinded by the dust which the Opposition threw so vigorously into the air, that Walpole's power gave way. We hold, then, that he had no need—and we are sure he was too good an economist—to govern by means of extensive corruption.*

The Committee of Inquiry, appointed by unscrupulous enemies for the single purpose of heaping up accusations

* His saying that "all these men (*i.e.*, a particular knot of politicians) have their price," has been converted into the sweeping statement that "all men have their price."

against the dethroned Minister, utterly failed to substantiate this scandal. So much is admitted by Lord Stanhope, who treats Walpole's memory with a halting generosity. "If," he says, "his acts of bribery and corruption had been of such common and daily occurrence as his enemies had urged—nay, even if they approached in any degree to the representations of them—it is impossible that a band of determined enemies, armed with all ordinary power, should have failed to bring to light a considerable number. Instead of these the Report could only allege that during one election at Weymouth, a place had been promised to the mayor and a living to his brother; and that some revenue officers who refused to vote for the ministerial candidate had been dismissed. It denounces a certain contract as fraudulent, because the contractors had gained 14 per cent., forgetting that large profit in one case is often required to counterbalance total loss in another. It then proceeds to express some loose suspicions as to the application of the sum for secret and special services . . . On the whole, this Report of the Committee from which so much had been expected, instead of exciting indignation against the Minister, rather drew ridicule upon themselves, and as we are told by a contemporary, was received by the public with contempt."

For our part, we have been unable to find any satisfactory evidence that Walpole often expended the public money in the purchase of hostile votes or the reward of venal supporters. The calumnies of Smollett or of the 'Craftsman,' too hastily taken up and repeated as if they

were proofs, must be dismissed as worthless by impartial minds. Undoubtedly, by his Government, as by all governments, resource was occasionally had to the tactics by which the wavering are confirmed and the faithful encouraged. It cannot be denied that he dealt to some extent in the purchase of small boroughs. But we repeat that no evidence exists to justify the charge of wholesale corruption so constantly brought against Walpole's administration.

IV.

A GRACEFUL writer comments very forcibly on the phenomenon—unparalleled before or since—of Walpole's long lease of power. "He had it all his own way" says Mrs. Oliphant, "for twenty years. From being unanimous his Cabinet became dutiful, his colleagues yielded to his sway, or, as we have seen, were cast aside by his irresistible influence. Even his failures did not affect him as other men's failures affected them. The whole country rose against his Excise Bill, yet he stood erect and firm, and the next day was strong and supreme as ever. Though English society was honeycombed by Jacobite plots; though it was still possible that such a man as Bishop Atterbury should be cut short in the midst of his career, impeached, and exiled as a traitor; though Dean Swift by his 'Drapier's Letters,' would lash Ireland into furious outcry against the project of a copper coinage; and though in Edinburgh the Porteous Mob set law and order at bold defiance; yet Walpole remained unshaken, ruling so wisely and so well that Great Britain was undisturbed by domestic rebellion or foreign enmity." A strong and wise rule, powerful to resist, yet knowing when to yield; a consistent home policy, in which everything gave way to the interest of the nation; while the as yet undeveloped doctrine of non-intervention abroad was pushed as far as was compatible with the temper of the time; a practical tolerance, in complete

yet silent contradiction to many intolerant and unchristian laws, which the Minister, while eluding them, was too judicious to awaken into life by any agitation for their repeal : such was the reign of Robert Walpole.

But the reign was not wholly without danger of interruption. An occasional shadow secured him from that fatality of unbroken prosperity which Herodotus has indicated in his story of Polycrates of Samos and King Amasis. At the accession of George the 2nd it was generally supposed that the all-powerful Minister would be overthrown. With the new sovereign he was reported to be no favourite ; in truth, the word "rogue" had been applied to him by royal lips. When the news of the death of George the 1st, which took place at Osna-brück (June 10th, 1727), reached London, Walpole hastened to convey it to the heir-apparent. On arriving at Richmond Palace he found that the Prince, according to wont, had retired to enjoy an afternoon slumber. At the Minister's request he was awakened, and starting up, he entered the presence-chamber, half dressed. Sir Robert knelt and kissed his hand. At first the King would not believe the Minister's information, nor was he convinced until the ambassador's despatch was shown him. The question was then put, whom would his Majesty appoint to prepare the necessary declaration to the Privy Council ? To Walpole's disappointment, for he expected that the choice would have fallen upon himself, the King named Sir Spencer Compton. Whereupon the baffled Minister withdrew.

Sir Spencer Compton, a son of the Earl of North-

ampton, and the Speaker of the House of Commons, had been much trusted and favoured by the King as Prince of Wales. He was a man of genial disposition and reputable character, but of no great parts. So unfitted was he for the post to which royal caprice had called him, that when Walpole apprised him of the King's commands, he entreated the Minister to draw up the declaration for him. Walpole, with his thorough knowledge of men, duly appreciated his rival's weakness, and said to his friend, Sir William Yonge, "I shall certainly go out, but let me advise you not to go into violent opposition, as we must soon come in again." The Hanoverian kings, on their accession to the throne, invariably acted on the principle of discarding their predecessor's advisers; but George the 2nd was ruled by his wife,* and Queen Caroline thoroughly trusted Walpole. With his usual sagacity he had discovered her influence over the royal mind, and while his less discriminating rivals had paid their court to the mistress, the Countess of Suffolk, his homage had been given to the King's wife. She, on her part was too able a woman† not to understand the

* The King, however, was under the impression that his judgment was unimpeachable, and that his will always prevailed. He laughed at monarchs who had been governed by their wives or mistresses. A contemporary balladist satirised this foible happily :—

"You may strut, dapper George, but 'twill all be in vain,
We know 'tis Queen Caroline, not you that reign—
You govern no more than Don Philip of Spain.
Then if you would have us fall down and adore you,
Lock up your fat spouse as your dad did before you."

The allusion in the last line is to George the 1st's imprisonment of his consort, Sophia Dorothea of Zell.

† "Queen Caroline had been handsome in her youth, and to the last

extent of his popularity not to appreciate his administrative capacity. Probably she did not value it the less highly, because he offered to obtain for her from Parliament a jointure of £100,000 a year, while Compton was afraid to propose more than £60,000.

The Queen showed at the earliest moment to which side her sympathies would be given. When Compton submitted to the King the speech which Walpole had prepared for him, a debate arose upon it in the Council, and Sir Spencer was again compelled to appeal to his predecessor. The Queen, a better judge (says Horace Walpole) than her husband of the capacities of the two men, having silently watched for a proper moment to

retained great expression in her countenance, and sweetness in her smile. Her character was without a blemish, and her conduct always marked by judgment and good sense. During the violent quarrels between her husband and his father, she had behaved so prudently that she equally retained the affection of the first and the esteem of the latter. With the nation also she was more popular than any other member of her family till George the Third. Her manner most happily combined the royal dignity with female grace, and her conversation was agreeable in all its varieties, from mimicry and repartee up to metaphysics. She was fond of talking on all learned subjects, and understood something of a few. Her toilet was a strange medley: prayers, and sometimes a sermon, were read; tattle and gossip succeeded; metaphysics found a place; the head-dress was not forgotten; divines stood grouped with courtiers, and philosophers with ladies."—Earl Stanhope, 'History of England from the Peace of Utrecht,' ii. 171, 172. A fine sketch of the Queen's character will be found in Thackeray's 'Lectures on the Four Georges.' For details of her Court the reader is referred to Lord Hervey's 'Memoirs of the reign of George II.' Lord Hervey was one of the cleverest and most faithful of Walpole's partisans, and frequently replied with success to the attacks of the *Craftsman*. See also Dr. Doran's 'Lives of the Queens of Hanover.'

overturn the new designations, lost no time in observing to the King how prejudicial it would be to his affairs to prefer a man in whose own judgment his predecessor was the fittest person to execute the office. On the day after the accession, when all the nobility and gentry in town crowded to kiss hands, and every back was turned on the fallen Minister, and every eye directed towards the new dispenser of patronage, Caroline singled out for special notice Lady Walpole, exclaiming, as she saw her rudely hustled and kept back by the throng, "There, I am sure I see a friend!" The interregnum lasted but a few days. Compton was not only unable to contend against the Queen's influence in the Cabinet, but he could not hope to oppose Walpole with any success in the House. Moreover, he felt that the burden of office was too heavy for him. He resigned, and, being gratified with the Earldom of Wilmington and the Presidency of the Council, sank into a contented obscurity.

— Thenceforward, until the death of Caroline, she and the Minister skilfully managed the honest, well-meaning, but obstinate and shallow-minded little King between them. No inconsiderable tact was necessary; for before all things, it was indispensable that he should not know he was governed. By careful study and long experience of his temper, Caroline knew, as Lord Hervey tells us, how to instil her own sentiments while she affected to receive his Majesty's. "She could appear convinced while she was controverting, and obedient while she was ruling; and by this means her dexterity and address made it impossible for any-

body to persuade him what was truly his case—that whilst she was seemingly on every occasion giving up her opinion and her will to his, she was always in reality turning his opinion, and binding his will to hers. She managed this deified image as the heathen priests used to do the oracles of old, when kneeling and prostrate before the altars of a pageant god, they received with the greatest devotion and reverence those directions in public which they had before instilled and regulated in private.”

The confidential intercourse which subsisted between Queen Caroline and the Minister seems to us most honourable to both. It may be—it has been—said that the power they exercised was obtained by no very creditable means and employed for no very elevated purposes. But no other course was open to them than to govern through the King, and that they should thus govern was essential to the safety of the kingdom. It may be admitted that Walpole was ambitious, and that Caroline desired to seat the Hanoverian dynasty firmly on the throne; but higher motives were not wanting in either case. The impartial historian cannot but own that Walpole clearly saw and laboriously advocated the best interests of his country, and that the Queen eventually learned to value the freedom and toleration secured by the English Constitution. To keep the land at peace, to baffle the plots of Bolingbroke and the Pretender, to promote the extension of commerce, were objects worthy of all the care which Walpole and the Queen bestowed upon them; and who will blame them, if, to gain such objects, they were compelled to profit by the

weaknesses of George the 2nd? The two were very faithful to one another. The Queen made her husband adopt the Minister's views even when she herself did not approve of them; and Walpole gave the Queen his support and advice in the domestic troubles that disturbed her later years, and especially in her bitter experiences of the ingratitude and unmanly hypocrisy of her eldest son, that Prince Frederick whose memory has come down to us loaded with universal contempt.

A well-known and yet almost inconceivable escapade on the part of the Prince would seem to have hastened the poor Queen's death. On the 31st July, 1737, his wife was seized with the pains of childbirth. The Royal Family were then at Hampton Court, and every arrangement had been made for the care of her Royal Highness on receiving the first summons. But the moment her travail began, the Prince, to the great peril of her life, hurried her from the Palace, and carried her to St. James's; and this, too, in the middle of the night, and without sending any message to the King and Queen, or the great Officers of State always present on such occasions. When the King was apprised of the abrupt departure, he despatched Sir Robert Walpole and Lord Harrington to attend the birth; but it had taken place before they could arrive. They were followed at half-past two by the Queen, who was astonished and perplexed by her son's incomprehensible behaviour. But her reception showed that her presence was unwelcome. Instead of offering apology or explanation, the Prince "spoke not a word." On the Queen's re-

tiring, he gave her his hand, and led her into the street to her coach, still silent; but observing that a crowd had gathered at the gate, he kneeled down in the dirt, and humbly kissed her hand. Her anger must rapidly have passed into inexpressible scorn !

Lord Hervey tells us that against her domestic trials she was unable to hold up her head; and the strain proved too great to bear when the Prince attempted by an appeal to Parliament to wrest from the King a larger yearly allowance. "She said she had suffered a great deal from many disagreeable circumstances this last year : the King's staying abroad ; the manner in which his stay had been received and talked of here ; her daughter the Princess Royal's danger in lying-in ; and the King's danger at sea ; but that her grief and apprehension at present surpassed everything she had ever felt before ; that she looked on her family from this moment as distracted with divisions of which she could see or hope no end—divisions which would give the common enemies to her family such advantage, as might one time or other enable them to get the better of it : and though she had spirits and resolution to struggle with most misfortunes and difficulties, this last, she owned, got the better of her—that it was too much for her to bear ; that it not only got the better of her spirits and resolution, but of her appetite and rest, as she could neither eat nor sleep ; and that she really feared it would kill her."

One day in November she was seized with severe illness, but she rose and saw company as usual. From one to another she went with heroic composure, saying

the right thing to everybody. But at last she whispered to Lord Hervey, "I am not able to entertain people." "Would to God," replied her faithful Chamberlain, "the King would have done talking of 'the Dragon of Wantley,' [a very popular burlesque, written by Henry Carey,* and recently produced at Covent Garden], and release you." After awhile his Majesty was pleased to retire, telling the Queen, as he went by, that she had overlooked the Duchess of Norfolk. The Queen, scarcely able to stand, made her excuses to the Duchess, the last person to whom she spoke in private, and then withdrew, "going immediately to bed, where she grew worse every moment."

Her complaint was a rupture, which, from an excess of delicacy, she had always concealed from her attendants. Her sad condition being thus unknown to her physicians, they prescribed for gout in the stomach, and the remedies consequently increased the disease. When it was at length disclosed to them—a disclosure which the Queen seems to have dreaded more than death itself—the case was hopeless. She submitted, however, with great patience and courage to the operations that were deemed advisable, and checked as well as she could every expression of suffering. The King, who really loved her with all the affection of which he was capable, showed himself heart-broken, but still sublimely selfish. In order to watch over her, he

* Carey is remembered now-a-days by his charming ballad of 'Sally in our Alley,' which so competent a critic as Mr. Palgrave pronounces "a little masterpiece in a very difficult style."

lay on her bed all night in his night-gown, so that neither he could sleep, nor she turn about easily. To and fro he wandered incessantly, weeping, and maundering over the dying Queen's great qualities.* Returning to her side he gave vent to his impatience. "How the devil," he exclaimed, "should you sleep when you will never be still a moment! You want to rest, and the doctors tell you nothing can do you so much good, and yet you always move about. Nobody can sleep in that manner, and that is always your way; you never take the proper method to get what you want, and then you wonder you have it not." If she fixed her darkening wistful gaze on a particular spot, he fell into a fever of apprehension, and cried, loudly and quickly: "*Mon Dieu, qu'est ce que vous regardez? Comment peut-on fixer ces yeux comme ça?*" He was anxious that she should eat; and, in truth, much of his strange irritable conduct was due to the genuine affection which struggled with his prevailing selfishness.

When her physicians acknowledged that human skill could do no more, the Queen bestowed her blessing on those of her children who had assembled by her side. The eldest son was away; brutally declaring that "they should soon have good news; that she could not hold out much longer!" According to Horace Walpole, however, the Queen, though refusing to see him lest she should

* There is not in all English literature so strange and powerful a death-scene as this of Queen Caroline. It is described with wonderful force of realism in the generally frigid pages of Lord Hervey.

irritate the King, sent the silly prodigal her blessing and her forgiveness.* She counselled her son William, afterwards so well or ill-known as Duke of Cumberland, to stand by the King, but never come into collision with his brother. To her daughter Caroline she entrusted the charge of her two little girls, Mary and Louisa. "Poor Caroline!" she gasped; "it is a fine legacy I leave you." Still composed and tearless, while all around her were weeping and disturbed, she turned to the King, and advised him to marry again. Wiping his eyes, and sobbing between every word, with much ado the heart-broken husband faltered out an answer:—"Non—j'aurai des maîtresses!" Do not let us be too hard upon the poor sovereign; after his way he meant to imply a pledge of faithfulness to her memory. There was a touch of irony in the dying Queen's reply:—"Ah, mon Dieu! cela n'empêche pas!" This was the only comment on her married life which she permitted herself; but it shows that she had not viewed her husband's irregularities without a pang at the heart.

It was now Walpole's time to say farewell. The Queen, neglecting the artifices by which she usually disguised her management of the King, said simply:

* We do not see why Horace Walpole's assertion should not be credited. Stress is laid upon Chesterfield's satire ("And unforgiving, unforgiven dies"), but Chesterfield had no love for Queen Caroline; nor is Pope a trustworthy authority when he writes, ironically:—

"Hang the sad verse on Carolina's urn,
And hail her passage to the realms of rest,
All parts perform'd, and all her children bless'd!"

"My good Sir Robert, you see me in a very indifferent situation. I recommend the King, my children, and the kingdom to your care." Walpole listened with some alarm, lest this mode of making him of more consequence than the King should awaken the royal jealousy. But George the 2nd had by this time learned the worth of his able Minister.

Shortly before she died Caroline asked of her physician: "How long can this last?" and on his replying, "Your Majesty will soon be eased of your pains," she rejoined, "The sooner the better." She then repeated a prayer of her own composition, in which (it is said) the glow of natural eloquence demonstrated the vigour of a great and good mind. When her speech began to hesitate, and she seemed on the brink of dissolution, she desired to be lifted up in her bed, and, fearing that nature would not endure long enough without artificial support, requested that water might be sprinkled on her. With some courage and calmness of mind she invited her weeping relations to kneel down and pray for her. While they were reading some prayers she exclaimed, "Pray aloud, that I may hear"; and at the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, in which she joined as best she could, she said, "So!" and waving her hand, lay back, dead.*

* We have followed in the text Dr. Edward Clarke's 'Essay towards the Character of Queen Charlotte,' published in 1738. As one of the chaplains-in-ordinary, he would certainly know all that passed. Additional particulars, however, are supplied by Lord Hervey. It would seem that at Walpole's suggestion the Archbishop of Canterbury was sent for, but of what passed between him and the Queen nothing is known, except that she recommended to his care Dr. (afterwards Bishop) Butler, the clerk of

her closet, and the illustrious author of the 'Analogy,'—whose genius she had had the discernment to recognise, and at whose hands a few weeks previously she had received the Holy Sacrament. All that the inquiring crowd could learn from the Archbishop, on his quitting the death-room, was, "that her Grace was in a heavenly disposition." Her last words, according to Lord Hervey, were—as she experienced an increased difficulty of breathing—"I have now got an asthma; open the window,"—and, after an interval, "Pray!"

V.

THE death of Caroline exercised no unfavourable influence on Walpole's position, as his friends feared and his enemies hoped it would have done. The King remembered with gratitude rather than jealousy the dying words in which the Queen had committed him to Walpole's charge. And yet, in less than five years, he fell irretrievably from power. His fall has astonished some of his biographers; but, in truth, there was nothing wonderful about it. We need not go far to seek its cause. It was not so much that the Opposition had been formidably strengthened by the powerful Minister's impatience of independence or rivalry on the part of a colleague. It was not so much that the public mind had been inflamed by the persistent calumnies showered upon him by poets, wits, and pamphleteers. But it was because Walpole failed to sympathize with the yearning for action that was beginning to stir the heart of the nation after a long period of tranquillity and rest. English political history may be measured out by cycles, recurring cycles of peace and apathy, and of restlessness and martial ardour. A cycle of the latter kind had now come round; but Walpole, a peace Minister by genius, temperament, and conviction, would not adapt himself to it. And hence it came to pass that he lost his hold upon the nation. Deserted by the commercial classes, he necessarily succumbed to the united Opposition of Patriots

and "Boys," (as he contemptuously designated the younger Whigs), and the treacherous machinations of his own Cabinet.

Early in 1738, the so-called "Patriots," disappointed in their expectations that George the 2nd when bereft of his wife would deprive himself of his Minister, anxiously sought for some means of revenge upon the latter. They directed their simultaneous efforts, with shameless inconsistency, towards a reduction of the army and a war with Spain. Shippen, the most honest of Walpole's opponents, moved that the number of 12,000 should be substituted for the 17,000 soldiers asked by Government. Shippen was a Jacobite, and his object was to lay the kingdom open to an invasion by the Pretender. Walpole's reply was so powerful and convincing that the Patriots dared not push the motion to a division. "No man of common prudence," he said, "would venture any longer to profess himself openly a Jacobite; by so doing he might not only injure his private fortune, but render himself unable to serve effectually the cause he had embraced; therefore, few such men could be found in the country. Your right Jacobite," he continued, "disguised his true sentiments, and roared out for revolutionary principles. He pretended to be a great friend to liberty, and a warm admirer of 'our ancient constitution'; and under this pretence numbers daily endeavoured to sow discontent among the people. These men knew that discontent and disaffection were like wit and madness, separated by thin partitions; and hence they hoped that if they could once render the people thoroughly discontented, it would be easy to render them disaffected. By

the accession of their new allies, as he might justly call them, the real but concealed Jacobites had succeeded beyond their anticipations."

The Opposition was more successful in fomenting the angry feeling against Spain, which was due partly to the greed of our merchants, and partly to the increasing military spirit of the nation. The English traders had for years complained that they were not allowed free commercial intercourse with Spanish America; and Walpole's anxiety to settle their grievances amicably had been ridiculed by the Opposition as a craven timidity. As far back as 1731 Bishop Atterbury had satirised him as "the cur dog of Britain and spaniel of Spain." The old reproach was revived as the irritation of the mercantile classes increased; and yet it is certain that the irritation was unfounded, and that the Spaniards had good reason to take umbrage at the smuggling carried on under the English flag. But the merchants filled the country with their clamour, and prepared highly coloured statements of injuries inflicted upon English seamen, which were urged in Parliament with all the skill and eloquence and force that Pulteney and Barnard, Wyndham and William Pitt (then rising into fame) could command. All this might have failed but for the dexterous use made of what Burke has aptly entitled the "fable of Jenkins's ears"; the said Jenkins being the master of a trading sloop which had been boarded and searched by a Spanish guarda-costa. On returning to England he appeared before the Bar of the House of Commons to tell his tale. "The Spanish captain," he said, "had torn off one of his ears, bidding him carry it to the King,

and tell his Majesty that were he present he should be similarly served." That Jenkins had lost an ear, which he carried about with him, wrapped in cotton, to excite sympathy, is certain; it is tolerably certain also that he had lost it in the pillory. But the House was not inclined to investigate his story; it was eagerly accepted as true. A member asked him what his feelings were when he found himself in the hands of such barbarians. His reply had probably been suggested, and the question, we suspect, was prearranged. "I recommended my soul to God," he said, in mock heroics, "and my cause to my country." These words were caught up by the populace, and, traversing all England, kindled into a flame the latent fires of patriotic indignation.

• Walpole's difficulties were many.* He had to contend

* His diplomatic efforts were ridiculed in "an excellent new ballad," entitled 'The Negotiators; or, Don Diego brought to Reason,' which ran thus:—

"Our merchants and tars a strange pother have made,
With losses sustain'd in their ships and their trade;
But now they may laugh and quite banish their fears,
Nor mourn for lost liberty, riches, or ears:
 Since *Blue-String* the great,
 To better their fate,
 Once more has determin'd he'll *negotiate*;
And swears the proud Don, whom he dares not to fight,
Shall submit to his logic, and do'em all right.

"No sooner the Knight had declared his intent,
But straight to the Irish Don Diego he went;
And lest, if alone, of success he might fail,
Took with him his brother to balance the scale.

For long he had known,
What all men must own,

That two heads were ever deemed better than one:
And sure in Great Britain no two heads there are
That can with the Knight's and his brother's compare."

with the warlike feeling of the country, which the Court fully shared ; with the Government of Spain, which threw continual obstacles in the way of negotiation, and with the insubordination of some of his colleagues. The Duke of Newcastle, that singular personage whose eccentricities have been preserved for our amusement by the incisive pen of Horace Walpole, was a special source of embarrassment. Without the great Minister's ability, he had all his love of power, and was content to endure any humiliation in order to gratify it. During the administration of Stanhope, he had been Stanhope's devoted friend and admirer. In Walpole's government, his friendship and admiration were at Walpole's service until he saw an opportunity of clutching at a larger share of influence. Acute enough to detect the diminution of Walpole's popularity and the King's sympathy with the popular clamour for war, he conceived that he might venture on independent action. With the consent or connivance of the King, he sent "angry instructions and memorials" to the British ambassador in Spain, which Walpole found it very difficult to explain away. A similar inclination to warlike measures, but, as Earl Stanhope

Walpole was created a Knight of the Garter in 1726, being the first Commoner, except Montague, afterwards Lord Sandwich, who had been thus honoured. It seems to have been a special provocation to his enemies, who dub him "Sir Blue," Blue-String," and so on. In the ballad of 'The Statesman,' we read :—

"However, let him have his whim,
And dangle the Blue-String,
So he's but doom'd at last
In a *hempen* one to swing."

remarks, on more public-spirited grounds, was also manifested by Lord Chancellor Hardwicke and by Lord Harrington. "The former, on one occasion, speaking in the House of Lords, inveighed with so much vehemence against the Spanish depredations, that Walpole, who was standing behind the throne, could not forbear exclaiming to those around him: 'Bravo! Colonel Yorke, bravo!' Nor durst Walpole at this crisis, with the inclinations of both King and people against him, pursue his usual haughty course, and at once cashier his wavering colleagues."

~The war party, after Walpole had fought a long and skilful battle against their designs, gained the day; and a Declaration of War against Spain was issued on the 19th of October, 1739. It was received by a credulous and excited people with extravagant joy. A triumphal procession paraded the streets of London, as if victory had been already won. From all the Metropolitan steeples the bells sent forth merry peals. "Let them ring," said Walpole moodily; "by-and-by there will be wringing of hands." In fact, the country, to use a well-known phrase, went into this war with a light heart, and in total ignorance of the burden it had undertaken.

~The conduct of Walpole in retaining office, after he had been forced into a war of which he strongly disapproved, has been the occasion of much severe comment. "No person was more thoroughly convinced," says Lord Macaulay, "of the absurdity of the cry against Spain. But his darling power was at stake, and his choice was soon made. He preferred an unjust war

to a stormy session." In a similar spirit Lord Stanhope, who in everything that relates to Walpole does but echo Macaulay, exclaims, "At this the critical, the turning point of his political character, Walpole still unworthily clung to his darling office, thus proving that a love of power, and not a love of peace, as has been pretended, was his ruling principle. It was a sin against light." So Coxe had said before them. Had he come forward on this occasion, and declared that he had opposed the war as unjust, and contrary to the interests of his country, but finding that the voice of the people was clamorous for hostilities, he had therefore quitted a station which he could not preserve with dignity, as he was unwilling to conduct the helm of Government, when he could not guide it at his discretion, and to be responsible for measures which he did not approve,—had he acted this noble and dignified part, he would have risen in the opinion of his own age, and have secured the applause of posterity.

All this hostile criticism we regard as unjust. Putting aside the fact that in Walpole's time, the limits of ministerial responsibility were not very exactly defined, and that so long as a minister enjoyed the confidence of the Crown resignation did not seem imperative, we see no reason to doubt that he was actuated by patriotic motives. Because Sir Robert was coarse of countenance and burly of figure, because he drank heavily and lived no very cleanly life, because he had no love of letters and no refinement of taste,—except that he appreciated a good picture,—his biographers and critics have too readily assumed that

he could rise to no high standard of duty, and that his whole career was influenced by a not very elevated ambition. We believe, as evidently Queen Caroline believed, in his honesty; in his attachment to the interests of his country; in his sincere and enlightened desire to promote her welfare. He knew that the intoxication of vanity, which had hurried the nation into war, would soon be followed by the soberness of repentance, and of this repentance he was willing to avail himself. He knew that in the stormy waters into which the vessel of the State was drifting, a firm hand would be needed at her helm. And whose hand could that be but his? Of his superiority to his colleagues and rivals he could not but be aware. William Pitt, the "young cornet of horse," had as yet shown few signs of the commanding genius that has rendered illustrious the name of Chatham. Of Pulteney's defects he was keenly aware. That not even Carteret could adequately fill the premiership, he had good reason to be convinced. And so, it was surely nobler to remain at his post, and do his best to save his country from the perils she was so heedlessly encountering, than, in a passion of offended pride and wounded dignity, to withdraw from it, and abandon the reins of power to men unable to hold them firmly or temperately.

A recent writer supplies another, but we venture to think a less satisfactory explanation, unless we suppose, as may well have been the case, that in retaining office he was guided by more than one consideration, yielded to more than one impulse. "There is an instinct of nature," says Mrs. Oliphant, "which nerves

a man, in spite of himself, to continue in the post for which he feels himself the man most qualified—an instinct very noble in its essence, and which enables many to hold to their duty, notwithstanding much fainting of the flesh and weariness of spirit. Walpole was a better Minister than he was a man; no doubt in the depths of his nature, in the silence which a character prone to coarse and superficial expression of itself could never put into any words, he felt that his work was the best part of him, and that any salvation there could be for him lay in it. With such a dumb sense of the necessity of the effort, something touching and pathetic is in his pertinacity. He was rich, he was old, he was suffering—he could not gain more reputation, greater advancement, than he had already won. What worldly motive had the man to cling to his tedious, laborious profession, to keep himself in the way of constant assaults and rivalry? He clung to his work—it is the only interpretation which seems to us to throw any light upon his persistence. He felt not only that he could do it best, but that he was better in doing it.” *

His political prescience was soon justified by events.† The first victory won by an English squadron in the Spanish Main,‡ brought France into the field; and the

* Mrs. Oliphant's, 'Historical Sketches of the Reign of George II.,' i. 128.

† "The war is yours," said Walpole to Newcastle; "you have had the conduct of it; I wish you joy of it."

‡ Portobello was captured by Admiral Vernon's squadron, on the 21st of November, 1739.

death of the Emperor Charles the Sixth (1740) brought on an European crisis, in which England was soon involved. She did her best to observe treaties, and stoutly supported Maria Theresa in her heroic defence of her empire against a formidable coalition. But Admiral Vernon was repulsed before Carthage,^{*} and other reverses followed, which the Opposition hastened to attribute to Walpole's ineffective prosecution of the war. They had already joined issue with him. On the 13th of February, 1741, Lord Carteret in the Peers, and a Mr. Sandys in the Commons, had moved† an humble Address to the king, that he would be graciously pleased to remove the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole from His Majesty's presence and councils for ever. In the Lords, the motion, though supported by the Duke of Argyll and Lord Bathurst, was negatived by 108 votes against 59. In the Commons 106 voted for, and 290 against it. This signal success was partly owing to Walpole's splendid defence,‡ and partly to the

* In April, 1741. This expedition is satirised by Smollett in his 'Roderick Random.'

† When notice of this motion was given, Walpole expressed his readiness to meet it, and laying his hand on his breast, he added with some emotion, "*Nil conscire sibi, nulli pallescere culpa.*" Pulteney thereupon observed that he had misquoted Horace, who had written "*nulla pallescere culpa.*" Walpole wagered a guinea on his accuracy, but being proved in the wrong, threw the stake across the table to his opponent, who caught it, and holding the coin up to the House, sarcastically exclaimed, "It is the only money which I have received from the Treasury for many years, and it shall be the last."

‡ The opening of this speech was very effective :—"I ask from whence does this attack proceed? From the passions and prejudices of the parties combined against me, who may be divided into three classes, the Boys, the riper Patriots, and the Tories. The Tories I can easily for-

secession of the thirty-four Jacobite members, who, headed by "downright Shippen,"* withdrew from the division.

The exultation of Walpole's friends at so unexpected a result was as great as the mortification of his antagonists. It found expression in one of the cleverest caricatures of the period, 'The Motion,' in which Lord Carteret, in a coach, is represented as being driven towards the Treasury by the Duke of Argyll as coachman, with the Earl of Chesterfield, who, by their impetuosity, are overturning the vehicle. Between the Duke's legs sits Bubb Doddington in the form of a spaniel; Lord Cobham holds on to the back of the carriage as footman, while in front are seen Pulteney wheeling a barrow laden with copies of the 'Craftsman,' and other Opposition papers. Here are a few of the descriptive verses:—

"Who is dat de box do sit on ?

'Tis John, the hero of North Briton,

Who, out of place, does placemen sit on.

give; they have unwillingly come into the measure, and they do me honour in thinking it necessary to remove me as their only obstacle . . . Can it be fitting in them, who have divided the public opinion of the nation, to share it with those who now appear as their competitors? With the men of yesterday, the boys in politics, who would be absolutely contemptible, did not their audacity render them detestable? With the mock patriots, whose practice and professions prove their selfishness and malignity, who threatened to pursue me to destruction, and who have never for a moment lost sight of their object?"—Coxe's 'Walpole,' i. 637, 638.

* Shippen said of Walpole, to whom he seems to have been under some personal obligation, "Robin and I are two honest men. He is for King George, and I for King James; but those men with long cravats only desire places, either under King George or King James." On the other hand, Walpole said of Shippen, that he was the only man whose price he did not know.

Between his legs de spaniel curr see ;
 Though now he growl at Bob so fiercé,
 Yet he fawn'd on him once in *doggerel* versé. . . .

But pray who in de coaché sit-a !
 'Tis honest J-nny C-t-ritta,
 Who want in place again to get-a. . . .

Close by stands Billy, of all Bob's foes
 The wittiest far in verse and prose ;
 How he lead de puppies by de nose ! "

This success is thought to have thrown Walpole off his guard, while, instead of discouraging, it did but exasperate the Opposition, and combined all sections of it in a continuous attack upon the triumphant Minister, as the main grievance of the State. The nation was to be relieved from all its ills by the dismissal and punishment of Walpole. If he were removed, trade would revive and commerce flourish. If he were removed, victory would attend the armies and fleets of England. "Down with Walpole !" was the cry which everybody echoed. Finally, assurances were given to the other members of the Administration that they might retain their places if they would but abandon him. This was the cleverest move of the Opposition, and it proved successful. We believe with Macaulay that he might probably have weathered the storm for awhile had his colleagues proved faithful to him. But they plotted against their chief. The Earl of Isla was suspected ; *

* " But how will Walpole justify his fate ?
 He trusted Islay till it was too late,
 To trust a traitor that he knew so well !
 (Strange truth ! betray'd, but not deceiv'd, he fell !) "

Sir. C. Hanbury Williams.

the Duke of Newcastle something more than suspected. "His name," said Sir Robert, "is perfidy."

Parliament was dissolved at the end of April, and the new elections showed how disastrously the tide had turned against the Minister. When the new Parliament met, he found that his majority did not exceed sixteen; and under the influence of popular clamour, the artifices of the Opposition, and the cabals of his colleagues, it rapidly sank to zero. Yet Sir Robert was as courageous as ever. His final struggle against his enemies reminds us of Napoleon's campaign in 1814; it exhibits the same readiness, the same dash, the same fertility of resource, the same vigour in fighting every point. Never did he display a finer ability than in this hopeless defensive conflict. On the motion for electing a chairman of committees (December 16th), the Opposition mustered 242 votes against 238. "You have no idea of their huzza," writes Horace Walpole to his friend Mann,* "unless you can conceive how people must triumph after defeats for twenty years together. We had one vote shut out by coming a moment too late; one that quitted us for having been ill-used by the Duke of Newcastle but yesterday, for which, in all probability, he will use him well to-morrow—I mean, for quitting us." The son adds, "Sir Robert is in great spirits, and still sanguine. I have so little experience that I shall not be amazed at whatever scenes follow. My dear child, we have triumphed twenty years; is it strange that fortune should at last forsake us?" A day or two afterwards a Cornish election was carried in four

* Horace Walpole, *Letters to Sir Horace Mann*, i., 51-53.

divisions, the Minister's majority rising from 6 to 12, then to 14, and lastly to 36. A motion of Pulteney's was defeated by 237 to 227. But at the Westminster election the Opposition again triumphed, 220 against 216. "You see," writes Horace, "*four* is a fortunate number to them. We had forty-one new members in town, who would not or could not come down. The time is a touchstone for wavering consciences."

The House having adjourned during the Christmas holidays, both sides were actively engaged in preparing for a renewal of the struggle. Its severity was beginning to tell on Sir Robert's health and temper; but his spirit was still indomitable, and he rejected the advice of his personal friends that he should resign. He endeavoured, by an offer of an addition of £50,000 a year to his income, to detach the Prince of Wales from the Opposition; but his overtures were rejected. The Opposition were more successful in gaining over some of the Minister's adherents.* When the House met in January, Pulteney's motion, for referring to a Secret Committee the papers that had been laid on the table relating to the war, was defeated only by a majority of 3.

Horace Walpole publishes a lively account of this famous debate. It was at three o'clock on Thursday afternoon, he says, that Pulteney rose and moved for a

* Even Lord Hervey trimmed. "With a coffin-face, he is as full of his little dirty politics as ever. He *will not* be well enough to go to the House till the majority is certain somewhere, but lives shut up with my Lord Chesterfield and Mr. Pulteney—a triumvirate, who hate one another more than anybody they could proscribe, had they the power."—Horace Walpole, *ut supra*, i., 75, 76.

Secret Committee; an inquisition, a Council of Ten, that was to sit and examine whatever persons and papers they pleased, and to meet when and where they pleased. He protested much on its not being intended against *any person*, but merely to give the King advice, and on this foot they fought it till ten at night, when Lord Perceval blundered out that they had been cloaking with so much art, and declared that he should vote for it as a Committee of Accusation. Thereupon Sir Robert started up, and declared that but for what had just been said, he should not have spoken; as it was, he must take the matter to himself. He portrayed the malice of the Opposition, who, for twenty years, had not been able to touch him, and were now reduced to this "infamous shift." He defied them to accuse him, and desired only that if they did, they would do it in a fair and an open manner; he asked no favour but simply to be made acquainted with the charges brought against him. He spoke of Mr. Doddington,* who had called his administration infamous, as a person of great self-mortification, who, for sixteen years, had condescended to bear part of the odium. As to Mr. Pulteney,† who had just spoken a second time, Sir Robert said, he had begun the debate with great calmness, but he must give him his due, he had made amends for it in the end. In short, never was innocence so triumphant!

* George Bubb Doddington, a man of parts but of no character, sufficiently conspicuous in the "Diaries" of the Georgian period, deserted Walpole because he was refused a peerage.

† "Sir Robert actually dissected him, and laid his heart open to the view of the house."—*Sir R. Wilmot to the Duke of Devonshire*. (Quoted by Stanhope, iii. 185.)

The letter-writer adds that there were several glorious speeches on both sides: Mr. Pulteney's two, William Pitt's and George Grenville's, Sir Robert's, Sir W. Yonge's, Harry Fox's, Mr. Chute's, and Sir Dudley Ryder, the Attorney-General's. "My friend Coke, for the first time, spoke vastly well, and mentioned how great Sir Robert's character is abroad. Sir Francis Dashwood replied, that he had found quite the reverse from Mr. Coke, and that foreigners always spoke with contempt of the Chevalier de Walpole. This was going too far, and he was called to order, but got off well enough, by saying that he knew it was contrary to rule to name any member, but that he mentioned it only as spoken by an impertinent Frenchman."

"But of all speeches," continues Horace Walpole, "none ever was so full of wit as Mr. Pulteney's last. He said: 'I have heard this Committee represented as a most dreadful spectre; it has been likened to all terrible things; it has been likened to the King; to the inquisition; it will be a committee of safety; it is a committee of danger. I don't know what it is to be! One gentleman, I think, called it *a cloud*! (this was the Attorney-General) *a cloud*! I remember Hamlet takes Lord Polonius by the hand and shows him *a cloud*; and then asks him if he does not think it is like a whale.' Well, in short at eleven at night we divided, and threw out this famous Committee by 253 to 250, the greatest number that ever was in the House, and the greatest number that ever *lost* a question."

It is clear from the numbers of the division that the absentees were few, and that both parties had used

every effort to bring up their supporters. Horace Walpole confesses it was a most shocking sight, "to see the sick and dead brought in on both sides!" Some hobbled in upon crutches; Sir William Gordon came straight from his bed, with a blister on his head, and flannel hanging out from under his wig. "I could scarce pity him," says Horace, "for his ingratitude. A few weeks before, Admiral Sir Charles Wager, the First Lord of the Admiralty, had given his son a ship, and the father afterwards came down and voted against the Ministry. The son was cast away; but the Opposition concealed the news from his father that he might not absent himself. There were 'good-natured men,' however, on the Ministerial side, and one of them, a countryman of his own, went and told him the sad truth in the House. The old man, who looked liked Lazarus at his resurrection, bore it with great resolution, and said he knew *why* he was told of it, but when he thought his country in danger he would not go away. As he is so near death that it is indifferent to him whether he died two thousand years ago or to-morrow, it is unlucky for him not to have lived when such insensibility would have been a Roman virtue."

The Minister's courage and fertile capacity* compelled the admiration of his bitterest opponents. When the debate was over, Pulteney acknowledged that he had

* Archbishop Porter (of Canterbury), on taking leave of Sir Robert, after an interview, said: "Sir, I have been lately reading Thuanus (De Thou); he mentions a minister who, having long been persecuted by his enemies, at length vanquished them: the reason he gives, *quia se non deseruit*." An elegant compliment!

never heard so fine a debate on the ministerial side; and said to Sir Robert, "Well, nobody can do what you can!" "Yes," rejoined Walpole, "Yonge did better." Pulteney answered: "It was fine, but not of that weight with what you said."

But the end had come; the struggle was too unequal to be longer maintained. The decisive movement took place upon the Chippenham election petition (January 28th), when the Opposition secured a majority of one. Walpole, still undaunted, seemed prepared to hold office, in the face of the hostile Commons; but he yielded at length to the entreaties of his brother, his three sons, and his most trusted friends, as well as to the fears of his supporters, and on the night of Sunday, the 31st of January, formed the resolution to resign. When, next day, at a private audience, he announced his intention to the King, the latter fell on his neck, wept, and kissed him, and was so moved that he was unable to raise his gouty ex-Minister from the ground. After this feat had been accomplished, he expressed his deep regret for the loss of so faithful a counsellor, his gratitude for his services, and his hope of receiving his advice in the season of difficulty.

As soon as Walpole's intended resignation became known, he appeared to recover his popularity. More honours were paid to him than he had received in the fulness of his power. His levée was crowded. The attendance of persons of all ranks and distinctions was "prodigious," and "their expressions of affectionate regard and concern were extremely moving."

Certain it is that if Walpole had been defeated, the Opposition had won no real victory. He retired with all the honours of war, with flags flying and drums beating, making what terms he pleased; and so skilfully accomplishing his retreat as to break up the plans and disorganise the forces of the enemy. Marks of the royal favour were not wanting. He was created Earl of Orford, with a patent of rank for his natural daughter,* and received a pension of £4000 a year.† He was consulted by the King in the course of the negotiations for the formation of a new Ministry. It was he who overcame the royal dislike to Pulteney, who was understood to seek a peerage. This, by Sir Robert's advice, was conceded; and the ex-Minister, knowing that it would ruin his rival's popularity, exclaimed to his son, at the same time motioning with his hand as if he were locking a door, "I have turned the key of the closet upon him."

Walpole found many consolations in the hour of his defeat. Not the least was the arrival of a bronze antique, sent by Sir Horace Mann, the ambassador at Florence, and a valuable Domenichino, for his Gallery at Houghton, from the Zambeccari Palace at Bologna. Then an aged clergyman from Walsingham came to visit him. He had been his first tutor, he said, and had always predicted that he would rise to greatness. When asked why he had never called upon the Minister in his day of power, he ingenuously replied, "I knew you

* By Maria Skirret, whom he shortly afterwards married.

† This grant caused so great an outcry that Sir Robert relinquished it at the time, but sued for and received it two years afterwards.

were surrounded with so many petitioners asking preferment, and that you had done so much for Norfolk people, that I did not wish to intrude. But I always inquired how Robin went on, and was satisfied with your proceedings." And more than human must the ex-Minister have been if he had derived no pleasure from the dissensions and difficulties of his adversaries, which, indeed, he had done his best to prepare! The Opposition, no longer held together by their hatred of a common object, fell asunder, like a rope made of sand. A hundred questions were pressed upon them for which they had no solution ready. A hundred claims were preferred, which it was impossible for them to gratify. Pulteney, unable to seize the prize of office which he had pursued so eagerly, as Earl of Bath lost his hold upon the people, and was quietly set aside. Walpole, meeting him in the House of Lords, was able to say that they "were a couple of as insignificant fellows as any in England;" an epigram true of Pulteney, but hardly true of himself, since his counsel was sought by the King in every emergency.* Then, again the tide of popular feeling had turned. The Opposition had promised more than they could perform; and the disappointment felt at their broken promises was keen and general. "The downfall of Walpole," says Macaulay, "was to be the beginning of a political millennium; and every enthusiast had figured to himself that millennium according to the fashion of his own wishes. The republi-

* This was specially the case in 1744, when his influence in the House of Lords prevented the disbandment, at a most critical movement, of the Hanoverian Regiment. Henry Pelham, as First Minister, depended greatly on the veteran statesman's advice.

can expected that the power of the Crown would be reduced to a mere shadow ; the high Tory that the Stuarts would be restored, the moderate Tory that the golden days which the Church and the landed interest had enjoyed during the last years of Queen Anne would immediately return. It would have been impossible to satisfy everybody. The conquerors satisfied nobody." *

No injury was done to the deposed Minister by the secret Committee of Inquiry into his past conduct, which the House of Commons appointed by a majority of only seven.† It consisted of 21 members, of whom no more

* In 'A New Court Ballad,' by Lord Hervey, Pulteney's elevation to the peerage was happily ridiculed :—

" All that weather-cock Pulteney shall ask, we must grant,
For to make him a great noble, nothing I want ;
And to cheat such a man demands all my arts,
For though he's a fool, he's a fool with great parts.

" And as popular Clodius, the Pulteney of Rome,
From a noble, for power did plebeian become,
So this Clodius to be a Patrician shall choose,
Till what one got by changing, the other shall lose.

" Thus flatter'd, and courted, and gaz'd at by all,
Like Phaëton, rais'd for a day, he shall fall,
Put the world in a flame, and show he did strive
To get reins in his hand, though 'tis plain he can't drive."

† This was on the 23rd of March. The votes were 252 against 245. Horace Walpole, in a maiden speech of much animation, resisted the motion ; which was ably and almost fiercely supported by William Pitt. He remarked that if it were becoming in the Honourable Gentleman to remember that he was the child of the accused, the House must remember that they were the children of their country.

than two were friends of Walpole's ; and of these the ex-Minister, with his usual knowledge of men and manners, wisely observed that "they would become so jealous for the honour of the Committee as no longer to pay any regard to his." The Committee displayed much activity, but discovered nothing. They then declared that evidence was not forthcoming, because witnesses were afraid to confess ; and favoured the introduction of a Bill "to indemnify evidence against the Earl of Orford," that is, to grant to every witness a remission of all pains and penalties to which his disclosures might render him liable. This most unconstitutional measure, which really offered a bribe to witnesses willing to manufacture charges, passed the Commons, but in the House of Lords was rejected by a large majority.

The Committee, nevertheless, prosecuted their investigations ; and at the end of June presented a Report which was received "with inextinguishable laughter." The mountain had laboured, and the public laughed at the insignificant result of so much travail. The charges were few and unimportant, and even these, it is now admitted, were based on misapprehension or coloured by personal hostility. In fact, this Committee, from which his enemies had expected so much, effectually vindicated the ex-Minister's reputation.*

* "After a long and vigilant investigation, conducted by a packed and prejudiced jury, it was discovered that these grave and sweeping charges resolved themselves into an attempt upon the political virtue of the mayor of a small borough, the dismissal of a few Civil Service subordinates, the entering into *one* contract that was disapproved of, and certain vague accusations respecting the Secret Service money."—*A. C. Ewald*, p. 438.

Of the three years that remained to Walpole, the greater portion was spent at Houghton. Here he enjoyed the society of his pictures, and entertained his neighbours, the Norfolk gentry, those "mountains of roast-beef, roughly hewn out into the out-lines of human form," who so keenly oppressed his son Horace. Latterly, he suffered severely from an excruciating disease, and only in 1745 it became apparent that his end was approaching.* There was a moment when his friends thought his strong constitution and indomitable courage would prevail over his malady; but on the 4th of March his son writes: "His recovery is now at such a standstill that I fear it is in vain to expect much further amendment." He adds, "How dismal a prospect for him, with the possession of the greatest understanding in the world, not the least impaired, to lie without the use of it! for to keep him from pains and restlessness, he takes so much opiate, that he is scarce awake four hours of the four-and-twenty."

A few days before his death, he gave a proof of the liveliness of his judgment. The Duke of Cumberland, having vainly remonstrated with the King against a marriage with the Princess of Denmark, who was deformed, consulted the Earl on the best method of avoiding the match. With something of his accustomed cynicism, the old statesman advised him to give his consent on condition that he immediately received an

* Alarmed at the prospect of an invasion by the Young Pretender, the King had summoned him to London. He hastened to obey the royal command, but the journey aggravated his malady. He had an interview with the King; and soon afterwards took to his bed.

ample establishment. "Believe me," he added, "the match will no longer be pressed." The Duke acted on this advice with the result which Walpole had predicted.

After bearing his pains, much aggravated by an incautious recourse to a quack medicine, with the greatest composure, the Earl expired on the 18th of March, 1745, in the 69th year of his age. His remains were interred in the parish church at Houghton, without monument or inscription :

"So peaceful rests without a stone, a name
Which once had honours, titles, wealth, and fame."—*Pope*.

It is unnecessary to sketch at any length the character of a statesman whose career has become a portion of English History; and the reader might justly accuse us of presumption in attempting a task which has already been accomplished by so many distinguished — writers. That he was not a perfect minister may be acknowledged; but he was certainly one of the greatest ministers who have controlled the destinies of England. None have ever more thoroughly understood her best interests; and few have ever shown so complete a mastery of foreign politics as well as of domestic affairs. As a financier, he has had no rivals but Peel and Gladstone. There was nothing chivalrous about the man, and he does not awaken in us the enthusiasm which a Chatham excites, or the sympathy which a Canning commands; but it is only fair to remember that he did not live in a chivalrous age, that the social influences which surrounded him were inexpressibly mean and sordid. With more generosity of nature and a higher aim he

would have been a greater man ; but his cynicism was almost forced upon him by the baseness with which he came in contact.* We have already dealt with the allegation that he was fond of power. This, at least, is not the infirmity of a weak mind ; and if Walpole loved power, he used it worthily. The clearness and solidity of his judgment were remarkable ; he knew when to yield, and when to stand firm ; he saw at once the consequences of any given action, and how far it was prudent to persevere in any given cause. Not less remarkable was his power of work. He was a master of method ; and Lord Hervey justly said of him, that he did everything with the same ease and tranquillity as if he were doing nothing.

As we have said, he was not an orator ; he could not make great speeches as Burke or Fox almost always did, or as Wyndham sometimes did, or as Canning so often did. But he was a ready and an effective debater, with a clear, fluent, and forceful style, and a happy facility in exposition and argument. His replies were always models of effective reasoning and prompt indication of the weak points of an assailant. Coxe tells us that his voice was pleasing and melodious ; and his pronunciation, though he never wholly lost his provincial accent, distinct and audible. But the force

* To his cynicism Pope alludes :—

“ Would he oblige me, let me only find

He does not think me what he thinks mankind.”

It was shown in such speeches as his definition of gratitude,—“ A lively sense of favours to come ; ” and his comment on patriotism,—“ Patriots are easily raised. I have myself made many a one. ’Tis but to refuse an unreasonable demand, and up springs a patriot.”

of his speeches was mainly attributable to their general weight, energy, and perspicuity, and to his thorough mastery of the subjects to which they applied. A curious proof of his readiness is adduced by his biographer. During an important debate in the House of Commons, he observed that a member of the Opposition who sat near him,—for there was at that time no appropriation of particular benches to the members of a particular party,—had his written speech hidden in his hat, and from occasional glimpses at it he obtained a general knowledge of its contents. At the moment this member was about to speak, Walpole rose, and began by observing that were he a member of the Opposition, he should employ certain arguments. And he then recapitulated the speech he had just glanced at, taking up the various points *seriatim*, and confuting them with his usual skill.

As a man he had great failings, but he had many fine qualities. His licentiousness of conduct, thought, and conversation, common as this evil was in the society of the time, cannot be defended or excused. He was prone, too, to the most boisterous festivity; and the revels which twice a year he held at Houghton frequently drove his decorous brother-in-law, Lord Townshend, from his neighbouring seat at Rainham. Nor can we do otherwise than regret his indifference to letters and literary pursuits. On one occasion he said to his son Horace, who had proposed to amuse him by reading some historical composition, "Oh! do not read history, for that I know must be false." His tastes were those of

a country gentleman; he was fond of planting, and as he loved his bottle, so he loved the diversions of the field. Until prevented by physical infirmities, he rode to hounds with all a young man's zest, and dashed across country with the same boldness that he displayed in encountering the attacks of his enemies.

Walpole was generous to a fault; almost incapable of bearing malice; humane, grateful, and good-tempered; a man after Carlyle's own heart, for he could laugh well (with "the heart's laugh," as Hanbury Williams said); easy of approach, pleasing in conversation, and with a fascination of manner that secured the devotion of his friends and almost disarmed the hatred of his opponents. So Pope says of him:—

"Seen him I have, but in his happier hour
Of social pleasure, ill-exchanged for power;
Seen him, uncumber'd with the venal tribe,
Smile without art and win without a bribe."

He possessed indeed so many virtues, and he rendered to his country such signal services, that his vices, which we have not concealed, and his political errors, which we have not forgotten, we may well be content to dismiss in our estimate of his claims to an enduring reputation.

In his "Epistle to Henry Fox," Sir Charles Hanbury Williams has paid a tribute to the great statesman, which, with some allowance for a friend's exaggeration, his biographer may honestly adopt:—

"His soul was great, and dared not but do well;
His noble pride still urged him to excel.
Above the thirst of gold, as if in his heart
Ambition governed, avarice had no part. . . .

Open to friends, but e'en to foes sincere,
 Alike remote from jealousy and fear ;
 Tho' Envy's heart, tho' Faction's lies he heard,
 Tho' Senates frown'd, tho' Death itself appear'd ;
 Calmly he view'd them ; conscious that his ends
 Were right, and truth and innocence his friends.
 Thus was he form'd to govern and to please ;
 Familiar greatness, dignity with ease,
 Composed his frame, admir'd in every state,
 In private amiable, in public great ;
 Gentle in power, but daring in disgrace ;
 His love was liberty, his wish was peace.
 Such was the man that smiled upon my lays ;
 And what can heighten thought or genius raise,
 Like praise from him whom all mankind most praise ?
 Whose knowledge, courage, temper, all surpris'd,
 Whom many loved, few hated, none despis'd." *

Nor must we forget the tribute paid to Walpole by no less a man than Edmund Burke. "With many virtues, public and private, he had his faults ; but his faults were superficial. A careless, coarse, and over-familiar style of discourse, without sufficient regard to persons or occasions, and an almost total want of political decorum, were the errors by which he was most hurt in the public opinion, and those through which his enemies obtained the greatest advantage over him. But justice must be done. The prudence, steadiness, and vigilance of that man, joined to the greatest possible levity in his character and his politics, preserved the

* Sir C. Hanbury Williams was born in 1709 ; educated at Eton ; entered the House of Commons in 1738 ; was made a Knight of the Bath in 1744 ; and was afterwards sent as Ambassador to the Courts of Dresden, Berlin, and St. Petersburg successively. His reason gave way in 1757, and he died in 1759. His political poems and *jeux d'esprit* are full of liveliness and strength.

Crown to the Royal Family ; and with it their laws and liberties to this country. . . . The profound repose, the equal liberty, the firm protection of just laws, during the long period of his power, were the principal causes of that prosperity which took such rapid strides towards perfection ; and which furnished to the nation ability to acquire the military glory which it has since obtained, as well as to bear the burthens ; the cause and consequence of that warlike reputation."

Lord Brougham says of him :—" Inferior to many in qualities that dazzle the multitude, and undervaluing the more outward accomplishments of English statesmanship, nay, accounting these merits only so far as they conduced to parliamentary and to popular influence—and even much undervaluing their effects in that direction—Walpole yet ranks in the very highest class of those whose unvarying prudence, clear apprehension, fertility of resources to meet unexpected difficulties, firmness of purpose, just and not seemingly exaggerated self-confidence, point them out by common consent as the men qualified to guide the course of human affairs, to ward off public dangers, and to watch over the peace of empires. His knowledge was sound and practical ; it was, like all his other qualities, for use and not for ornament ; yet he lacked nothing of the information which in his day formed the provision of the politician. With men his acquaintance was extensive, and it was profound. His severe judgments, his somewhat misanthropic bias, never misled him ; it only put him on his guard ; and it may safely be affirmed that no man ever made fewer mistakes in his intercourse with either

adversaries, or friends, or the indifferent world. From these great qualities it resulted that a better or a more successful minister could not preside over any country in times of peace; and, if we are unable to conjecture how far his sagacity, his boldness, his prudent circumspection, his quickness of apprehension, would have sufficed to make him as great a war minister, we have to thank his wise and virtuous policy, which, steadfast in desiring peace, and his matchless skill, which, in the most difficult circumstances, happily securing the execution of his grand purpose, have left us only to conjecture what the last of national calamities could alone have proved."

Lord Brougham proceeds to defend the only part of Walpole's domestic administration, except his Excise scheme, which has ever been made the subject of open attack. And he remarks that the provision made for supplying a copper coinage to Ireland, which gave rise to Swift's famous and unscrupulous 'Drapier's Letters,' was advantageous to the country. It was Sunderland's idea, however,* and not Walpole's. As First Lord of the Treasury, he inherited it from his predecessor; and was bound to realise it: Lord Brougham passes on to speak of the statesman in his private character, describ-

* Copper coin was scarce in Ireland, and Government, to supply the deficiency, granted a patent to an iron-manufacturer, William Wood, to coin halfpence and farthings to the amount of £108,000 (afterwards reduced to £40,000), on terms not extravagantly remunerative. Swift seized upon the measure as one which could be used to stimulate Irish jealousy; and roused the popular passions by the fierce satire of a series of letters purporting to be written by M. B. a "Drapier of Dublin" (1724). Eventually, the patent was withdrawn.

ing him as open, honest, unaffected, abounding in kindness, overflowing with good humour, generous to profusion, hospitable to a fault, in his manners easy to excess :—and adding, “no wonder that the ruler of the country should have won all hearts by qualities which would have made a private gentleman the darling of society.” After admitting, as it is impossible not to admit, his moral defects, his coarseness of speech, his boisterous hilarity, and a predilection for gallantry which, perhaps he himself considerably exaggerated, Brougham concludes by saying :—“To hold up such men as Walpole in the face of the world as the model of a wise, a safe, an honest ruler, becomes the most sacred duty of the impartial historian; and, as has been said of Cicero and of eloquence by a great critic, that statesman may feel assured that he has made progress in the science to which his life is devoted, who shall heartily admire the public character of Walpole.”

“It is impossible,” says Mr. Lecky, “to consider his career with adequate attention without recognizing in in him a great minister, although the merits of his administration were often rather negative than positive, and although it exhibits few of those dramatic incidents, and is but little susceptible of that rhetorical colouring on which the reputation of statesmen largely depends. Without any remarkable originality of thought or creative genius, he possessed in a high degree one quality of a great statesman—the power of judging new and startling events in the moments of excitement or of panic as they would be judged by ordinary men when the excitement, the novelty, and the panic had passed.

He was eminently true to the character of his countrymen. He discerned with a rare sagacity the lines of policy most suited to their genius and to their needs, and he had a sufficient ascendancy in English politics to form its traditions, to give a character and a bias to its institutions. The Whig party, under his guidance, retained, though with diminished energy, its old love of civil and of religious liberty, but it lost its foreign sympathies, its tendency to extravagance, its military restlessness. The landed gentry, and in a great degree the Church, were reconciled to the new dynasty. The dangerous fissures which divided the English nation were filled up. Parliamentary government lost its old violence, it entered into a period of normal and pacific action, and the habits of compromise, of moderation, and of practical good sense, which are most essential to its success, were greatly strengthened."

The following lines, "On seeing a Portrait of Sir Robert Walpole," by Lady Mary Wortley Montague, will fitly close this sketch:—

"Such were the lively eyes and rosy hue
Of Robin's face, when Robin first I knew,
The gay companion and the favourite guest,
Loved without awe, and without views caressed.
His cheerful smile and open honest look
Added new graces to the truth he spoke.
Then every man found something to command,
The pleasant neighbour, and the worthy friend;
The generous master of a private house,
The tender father, and indulgent spouse.

The hardest censors at the worst believed,
His temper was too easily deceived
(A consequential ill good-nature draws,
A bad effect, but from a noble cause).

Whence then these clamours of a judging crowd ?
'Suspicious, griping, insolent, and proud—
Rapacious, cruel, violent, and unjust ;
False to his friend, and traitor to his trust !' "

History, calm and impartial, has answered the question in Sir Robert's favour ; and declared that " these clamours " proceeded from the malice and the ignorance of an unscrupulous faction.*

In the late Lord Lytton's play, (' Walpole : or, Every Man has His Price,' a Comedy in rhyme in Three Acts), Walpole is represented as saying of himself: (Act iii. Sc. 5.) :—

" . . . I wonder what lies the Historians will tell
When they babble of one Robert Walpole ! Well, well,
Let them sneer at his blunders, declaim on his vices,
Cite the rogues whom he purchased, and rail at the prices,
They shall own that all lust for revenge he withstood,
And if lavish of gold, he was sparing of blood ;
That when England was threatened by France and by Rome,
He forced Peace from abroad, and encamped her at home ;
And the freedom he left, rooted firm in mild laws,
May o'ershadow the faults of deeds done in her cause."

Henry Fielding twice addressed the Minister in verse. His ' Epistle to Sir Robert Walpole ' begins as follows :—

" While at the helm of State you ride,
Our nation's envy, and its pride ;
While foreign Courts with wonder gaze,
And curse those counsels that they praise ;

* The reader may be reminded that Walpole figures in L. E. L.'s (Miss London's) novel of ' Romance and Reality.'

Would you not wonder, sir, to view
Your bard a greater man than you ?
Which that he is, you cannot doubt,
When you have read the sequel out.

You know, great sir, that ancient fellows,
Philosophers, and such folks, tell us,
No great analogy between
Greatness and happiness is seen.
If then, as it might follow straight,
Wretched to be, is to be great ;
Forbid it, gods, that you should try
What 'tis to be so great as I ! "

BOOK II.
WILLIAM PITT,
EARL OF CHATHAM.



A.D. 1708-1778.

[For the earlier portion of Pitt's career, Earl Stanhope's *History* and Horace Walpole's *Letters* (as well as his *History of the Reign of George II.*) are available. For his career as a whole the student will consult the Rev. F. Thackeray's *History of the Right Hon. William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*; *Correspondence of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*; and Lord Macaulay's two celebrated *Essays*. See also, the *Grenville Correspondence*, edited by Smith; the *Annual Register* (from 1758); Massey's *History of the Reign of George III.*; Lord Campbell's *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*; Burke's *Works*; Almon's *Anecdotes of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham* (ed. 1710); W. H. Lecky's *History of the Eighteenth Century*; Lord E. Fitzmaurice's *Life of William, Earl of Shelburne*; Lord Waldegrave's *Memoirs*; etc. etc.]

Born, November 15, 1708
 Enters the Army, 1733
 M.P. for Old Sarum, 1735
 Secretary of State, 1756
 Dismissed, April, 1757
 Recalled, June, 1757
 Resigns Office, 1761

Opposes the Stamp Act, 1766
 Earl of Chatham, 1766
 Resumes Office, 1766
 Resigns, 1768
 Last Appearance in the House
 of Lords, April 8, 1778
 Dies, May 11, 1778

WILLIAM PITT,

EARL OF CHATHAM.

A.D. 1708–1778.



I.

THE disadvantage to a writer is great when he traverses ground previously occupied by Macaulay. He cannot hope to improve upon what Macaulay has said. All he can do is to record a fact, recapitulate an argument, or correct the mistakes into which the brilliant essayist's partialities or prejudices may have led him. He fears to attempt even so little as this; he is conscious of his inferiority; *impar congressu Achilli*. The second of the great Party-leaders whose careers we have undertaken to sketch is William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, the illustrious father of an illustrious son; but when we come to consider the chief features of his character we feel that they have been indicated by Macaulay with a precision and a picturesque force which cannot be excelled.

We shall avail ourselves therefore of his eloquent periods as an exordium to our humble biography.

He speaks of Pitt as a great man, but avers that his was not a complete and well-proportioned greatness. He describes his public life as "a rude though striking piece, a piece abounding in incongruities, a piece without any unity of plan, but redeemed by some noble passages, the effect of which is increased by the tameness or extravagance of what precedes and of what follows. His opinions were unfixed. His conduct at some of the important conjunctures of his life was evidently determined by pride and resentment." He adds that he had one fault, that which of all faults is most rarely found in company with true greatness,—he was extremely affected. "He was a remarkable instance of a man of real genius, and of a brave, lofty, and commanding spirit, without simplicity of character. He was an actor," says Macaulay,—not, we think, without considerable exaggeration,—“in the Closet, at Council, and in Parliament; even in private life he could not altogether discard his theatrical tones and attitudes.” Macaulay repeats the complaint of one of the most distinguished of his partisans that “he could never obtain admittance to Lord Chatham’s room till everything was ready for the representation, till dresses and properties were all correctly disposed, till the light was thrown with Rembrandt-like effect on the head of the illustrious performer, till the flannels had been arranged in folds as classical as those of Grecian drapery, and the crutch as gracefully placed as that of Belisarius or Lear.”

Admitting these faults and pettinesses, we must

nevertheless contend that Pitt possessed, in a very extraordinary degree, many of the elements of greatness, genius, passion, sensibility, and a strong enthusiasm for the great and beautiful. "There was something about him which ennobled conversation itself. He often went wrong, very wrong." But in Wordsworth's language,

"He still retained,
'Mid such abasement, what he had received
From nature, an intense and glowing mind."

And this, too, must in justice be said of him, that if he were proud of himself, he was proud also of his country; that if he sometimes thought of his own interests, he thought more frequently and more deeply of England's; and that to him must be ascribed the honour which the Roman senate paid to the general of its armies, "he never despaired of the Republic." In the hour of danger he was securely confident. If he guided the helm with a firm hand, it was because he believed in the vessel's happy fortune. And then, too, it must be confessed that he was never mean or little; that he never stooped to low aims; that he was always conscious of a great object. "In an age of low and dirty prostitution, in the age of Doddington and Sandys, it was something to have a man who might, perhaps, under some strong excitement, have been tempted to ruin his country,"—we know of nothing in Pitt's career to justify or even suggest such an assumption,—"but who would never have stooped to pilfer from her; a man whose errors arose not from a sordid desire of gain, but from a fierce thirst for power, for glory, and for vengeance." There was some-

thing noble, however, in Pitt's thirst for power ; it was not for the sake of power itself, as was the case with Granville and Newcastle, but for the sake of the ends to be achieved by that power. He cared nothing for the baubles or rewards of office, but only for what could be done with the opportunities which office afforded. The evidence of history proves that at a time when public men dealt with public money as if it were their own, he set an example of the most honourable disinterestedness. It proves that at a time when public men assumed that Government could be carried on only by having recourse to the most immoral artifices, Pitt heroically appealed to the higher and better elements of human nature. As Walpole was the Minister of Peace, so Pitt was the Minister of the People ; the first English statesman who recognised the democratical tendency of the British Constitution. Not truckling, like the Pelhams, to a strong aristocratical connection, nor like Lord Bute, depending on the personal favour of the sovereign, he threw himself upon the support of the middle-class, and inspired them with a profound faith in his integrity as well as in his genius. Then, relying upon them, he compelled a reluctant oligarchy and a still more reluctant Court to admit him to a prominent place in the administration ; and the power thus secured he employed in such a manner as to show that he had pursued it from no selfish motives, but with a desire to establish for himself a great and permanent reputation, and to leave his country more prosperous, more honoured, and more free than he found it.

In our later political history no statesman comes

before us with so strong an individuality as Pitt. To this day "the Great Commoner," is one of the few political personages with whom the ordinary Englishman is familiar. His tall erect stature, his eagle glance, his imperious countenance are remembered as well as his unswerving energy, his decision, his boldness of spirit, and the thunder and lightnings of his eloquence. In absolute genius he has scarcely had an equal among our modern statesmen. As an orator, he has never been surpassed. He possessed all those high rare qualities which enabled Demosthenes to wield at will the fierce democracy. He did not neglect, no great orator ever does, the careful cultivation of his endowment; he studied his attitudes, his gestures, the modulation of his voice;* but frequently, in the stress and passion of the moment, he forgot the arts of preparation, and poured out a torrent of glowing thoughts in burning words. His power of sarcasm was tremendous, and men actually trembled before the fury of his invective. Walpole says, that though no man knew so well how to say what he pleased, yet no man ever knew so little what he was going to say. With wonderful flexibility he adapted himself to the moods of his audience or the necessities of the occasion. He seemed able to anticipate the arguments of his adversaries, and to demolish them before they were uttered. His eloquence was, indeed, the natural produce of his

* "He was so attentive to forming his own taste, that he would not look at a bad print, if he could avoid it, wishing not to hazard his eye for a moment."—Lord Shelburne's Autobiography in his *Life*, by Lord E. Fitzmaurice, i. 73.

temper. It was elevated, impetuous, masterful, confident, as he was. It was warm with the enthusiasm that moved that haughty mind and stirred that noble heart. It was rich in fine images and noble expressions, in apt epithets and picturesque phrases that immediately fixed themselves in the hearer's memory. His speeches, indeed, exhibited little pathos and less wit, but they were the spontaneous offspring of a great mind. Moreover, though he was not like Fox, "an exhaustive debater;" nor like Burke, a poet and a philosopher; nor like Canning, a master of epigrammatic allusion and playful sarcasm; "he surpassed them all," says Mr. Lecky, "in the blasting fury of his invective, in the force, fire, and majesty of a declamation which thrilled and awed the most fastidious audience, in the burning and piercing power with which he could imprint his views upon the minds of his hearers." Grattan justly said of his orations that their material was found in "great subjects, great empires, great characters, effulgent ideas, and classical illustrations." It seemed as if he could condescend to nothing small or trivial. "The terrible," according to Charles Butler, "was his peculiar power; then the whole house sank before him." This is the testimony of all his contemporaries, of friends and foes alike. His influence over his audience was extraordinary. "Sugar, Mr. Speaker," he began on one occasion, and the exordium produced a laugh. "Sugar, sugar, sugar," he repeated, with his lightning glance and majestic frown directed towards the laughter, "who will now dare to laugh at sugar?" And the House sat in terrified silence. On another occasion, addressing Lord

Mansfield, he said : " Who are the evil advisers of his Majesty ? is it you ? is it you ? is it you ? " pointing to the different ministers until he came to the Chancellor. Several peers were round him, and Chatham said,—“ My Lords, please to take your seats.” When they had done so, he turned his finger towards Mansfield, exclaiming, “ Is it you ? Methinks Felix trembles.” Only a great actor could venture on such a *tour de force* as this. “ His words,” says Lord Lyttelton, “ have sometimes frozen my young blood into stagnation, and sometimes made it pace in such a hurry through my veins that I could scarce support it.”

Pitt's faith in himself was great. “ I know,” he said to the Duke of Devonshire, “ that I can save the country, and I know no other man can.” This was partly the secret of the popular faith in him ; the people saw him serene, unshaken, self-reliant, and *trusted* him. He stooped to no vulgar arts to gain popularity. He lavished his scorn upon Wilkes, when that pretended demagogue was the idol of the mob ; and when the old hatred of England for the Scots revived, he generously expressed his admiration of their courage. His personal integrity was beyond suspicion. Not even for the power he loved would he sully his hands with the public money or betray his principles. When Pelham appointed him to the lucrative office of Paymaster of the Forces, he refused to accept anything except his salary, because the profits were obtained by corrupt and illegal means. In a like spirit, when overtures were made for his support, he exclaimed “ I will not go to the Court if I may not bring the constitution with

me." When in the Cabinet his measures were opposed by his aristocratic colleagues, he haughtily answered, "It is the people who have sent me here." That there was something theatrical in his manner, and a certain ostentation in his conduct must be admitted, though not to the degree that Macaulay's exaggerated rhetoric pretends, or the Earl of Shelburne's prejudiced criticism implies. It was probably necessary to enable him to maintain his peculiar influence. "No man is a hero to his valet," says the old adage; and this is true because the hero in ordinary life too often descends to the common level. Pitt, with his consummate knowledge of mankind, was unwilling to err in this direction.* He endeavoured to preserve his superiority in all circumstances, and to live as one who was not of the multitude. It is a touch of true art in Byron's 'Corsair,' when he represents Conrad, the pirate chief, as resuming his usual dignity of mien before he joins his followers :

"He bounds—he flies—until his footsteps reach
The verge where ends the cliff, begins the beach;
There, checks his speed, but pauses less to breathe
The breezy freshness of the days beneath;
Then there, his wonted statelier step renew;
Nor rush, disturbed by haste, to public view:
For well had Conrad learned to meet the crowd
By acts that veil, and oft preserve the proud;
His was the lofty port, the distant mien,
That seems to shun the sight—and awe if seen;
The solemn aspect, and the high-born eye,
That checks low mirth, but lacks not courtesy;
All these he wielded to command assent."

* He himself says,—“Behaviour, though an external thing, which seems rather to belong to the body than to the mind, is certainly founded in considerable virtues.”

Such, we believe, was Pitt's motive, and his "acting" was forced upon him by the necessities of his position. But though he drew his support from the crowd, he never became a demagogue. In Parliament and in the Cabinet alike he retained his loftiness of demeanour, his "solemn aspect," and his "high-born eye;" and by these, no less than by the force of his will and the power of his genius, he succeeded in subduing the formidable opposition which incessantly threatened him.

William Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, came of an opulent and respectable family. His grandfather, who had been Governor of Madras, brought back from India the famous diamond which suggested the calumny of Pope,* and was purchased by the Regent Orleans for upwards of 2,000,000 livres (about £135,000), or nearly eleven times more than the vendor had given for it. The ex-governor bought lands and rotten boroughs, for which (old Sarum and afterwards Oakhampton) his son Robert sat in Parliament. Robert Pitt married a sister of the Earl of Grandison, by whom he had two sons. Thomas, the elder, succeeded to the estates and the rotten boroughs; the younger was the subject of the present notice.

He was born on the 15th of November, 1708. After a course of study at Eton he entered Trinity College, Oxford. During the second year of his University curriculum (1729) George the 1st died; whereupon, ac-

* "Asleep and naked as the Indian lay,
An honest factor stole the gem away."

according to custom the Oxonians expressed their loyal regret in such verse as they were able to compose. Pitt's grief found vent in some Latin lines, which are so bad as fully to deserve Macaulay's severe and characteristic criticism.* He had from his childhood been tortured by the gout, and being recommended to travel for the benefit of his health, he left Oxford without taking a degree, and visited France and Italy. Physically, whatever may have been the case mentally, he derived little advantage from his tour; and to the end of his days he suffered terribly from his inherited disease, to the effects of which some of his eccentricities are fairly attributable.

On the death of his father the straitness of the family's circumstances compelled him to adopt a profession. The army was his choice, and his friends procured him a cornetcy in the Blues. In 1734 his elder brother, at the general election, was chosen for Old Sarum and Oakhampton. When Parliament met, he decided on sitting for Oakhampton,—and William Pitt was returned as member for Old Sarum (A.D. 1735). Walpole was then at the head of affairs; but the power which he had enjoyed so long was threatened by an Opposition which

* Here is a specimen, which at least shows that Pitt had read Virgil:—

“Felix, qui potuit mundi cohibere tumultus!
Fortunatus et illi, sægri solamen amoris
Qui subit Angliacis, tanti audit nominis hæres.
Auspice Te, dives agitans discordia, ludo
Heu satiata nimis! furias amnemque severum
Cocyti repetat, propriosque perhorreat angues.
At secura quies, metuens et gratia culpæ
Te circumvolitent.”

every year increased in numbers and influence. It was composed of a strange coalition of Tories and Whigs, led by the man whom Walpole had offended and discarded. The Tories were more numerous but less formidable than the Whigs, for while the former were chiefly "ponderous foxhunters," broad-acred squires with bucolic tastes, the latter included the rising young men of the day, the "Patriots" as they called themselves, who considered it their peculiar mission to overthrow a Whig minister in defence of the principles of the Revolution.

While the King and his Court supported the Minister, the Prince of Wales extended his favour to the Opposition. This was the usual course of the heir-apparent during the first three Hanoverian reigns ; and it is only in our own time that we have had a Prince of Wales able to hold himself aloof from political struggles. In April 1736, Prince Frederick, the most contemptible, perhaps, of all scions of the House of Hanover, was married to the Princess of Saxe Gotha. On this occasion the usual congratulatory address from the House of Commons was moved, not by the Minister of the Crown, but by Pulteney, the leader of the Opposition. In the debate that ensued, Pitt made his first speech, and his fluency, animation, and self-possession at once secured the ear of the House. At this time, he presented all the qualifications which might be expected to fascinate a popular assembly.* His figure was tall but

* "He was tall in his person, and as genteel as a martyr to the gout could be, with the eye of a hawk, a little head, thin face, long aquiline nose, and perfectly erect."—Lord Shelburne (*Life*, by Lord E. Fitzmaurice, i. 77).

graceful, his eye shone with the fire of genius, his features were strikingly majestic. His voice—strong, clear, and melodious—was audible to the remotest benches, even when it sank to a whisper ; while, when exercised in its full power, it rose “like the swell of the organ of a great cathedral,” and could be heard “in the precincts of Westminster Hall.” His natural advantages Pitt, after entering on a parliamentary career, spared no pains to cultivate.* An unfriendly critic acknowledges that his action was equal to Garrick’s. By the expression of his eloquent and flexible countenance he added greatly to the effect of his discourse ; and while his smile had persuasion in it, his glance of contempt or anger frequently silenced an opponent. But apart from qualifications natural and acquired, Pitt was a great orator ; and of the orator as of the poet, it must be said that he is born, not made. He was a great orator, through the loftiness of his genius, the elevation of his aims, the passion of his enthusiasm, the sincerity of his fervour.† But he was not a great debater. He was wanting in self-command, and, as he spoke from impulse, he too frequently neglected to follow the course of the previous discussion. He was so well aware of his impetuous facility, which was apt to outrun discretion, that, on one occasion, he

* He studied Demosthenes with great assiduity ; and also Bolingbroke and Dr. Barrow. Some of the latter’s sermons he read so often as to know them by heart. Lord Chesterfield said that during the enforced leisure of his attacks of illness Pitt “acquired a great fund of premature and useful knowledge.”

† Benjamin Franklin said that he had sometimes seen eloquence without wisdom, and often wisdom without eloquence ; in Lord Chatham only had he seen them both combined.

said to Lord Shelburne: "I must sit still; for when I am once up, everything that is in my mind comes out." He did not succeed in his prepared orations. His genius could brook no constraints, even if self-imposed. He was at his best when called up by some chance allusion or unguarded word of an opponent, or when denouncing some measure or abuse with the full vehemence of passion. Walpole, writing of his share in a famous debate in 1735, writes: "He spoke at past one for an hour and thirty-five minutes; there was more humour, wit, vivacity, finer language, more boldness, in short, more astonishing perfections, than even you, who are used to him, can conceive. He was not abusive, yet very attacking on all sides; he ridiculed Lord Hillsborough, crushed poor Sir George Lyttelton, terrified the Attorney-General, lashed my Lord Granville, painted the Duke of Newcastle, attacked Mr. Fox, and even hinted up to the Duke of Cumberland." He adds: "Pitt surpassed himself; and then I need not tell you that he surpassed Cicero and Demosthenes. What a figure would their formal laboured cabinet orations make *vis-à-vis* to his manly vivacity and dashing eloquence! He spoke above an hour and a half, with scarce a bad sentence."* The orator's fire and impetuosity on this occasion are satirised by Sir Charles Hanbury Williams:—

* Horace Walpole did not love him, but in another place he writes: "Pitt was undoubtedly one of the greatest masters of ornamental eloquence; his language was amazingly fine and glowing; his voice admirable; his action most expressive; his figure genteel and commanding; bitter satire was his forte; when he attempted ridicule, which was very seldom, he succeeded happily."

"He bellow'd and roar'd at the troops of Hanôver,
And swore they were rascals whoever went over :
That no man was honest who gave them a vote,
And all that were for 'em should hang by the throat.

"He always affected to make the House ring
'Gainst Hanover troops and a Hanover King :
He applauded the way to keep Englishmen free,
By digging Hanôver quite into the sea."

The satire is weak, but it bears testimony to the stress of Pitt's eloquence.

The young member soon began to give so much annoyance to the Government that Walpole resolved on punishing him; and by an exercise of power which cannot be defended, dismissed him from his cornetcy (1736).^{*} By way of compensation, the Prince of Wales made him Groom of the Bedchamber; and his attacks, after this affront, lost nothing of their vehemence. He denounced the Minister's peace policy with an energy worthy of a better cause, and did his utmost to bring about that indefensible war with Spain which brought neither profit nor honour to his country. We believe he was sincere in his invectives, and that he advocated war because he thought it just and necessary. But the calmer judgment of posterity has vindicated the Minister against

^{*} Pitt's patrimony at this time, according to Chesterfield, was only £600 a year. His loss of office suggested to Mr. (afterwards Lord) Lyttelton the following lines :—

"Long had thy virtues mark'd thee out for fame
Far, far superior to a Cornet's name ;
This gen'rous Walpole saw, and griev'd to find
So mean a post disgrace that noble mind :
The servile standard from the free-born hand
He took, and bade thee lead the Patriot band."

his opponent, and he himself in later years saw and owned that he had been wrong. Burke has told us that it was his fortune to converse with many of the principal actors against Walpole, and with those who principally excited the clamour. And none of them, he says, no not one, did in the least defend the measure, or attempt to justify their conduct. They condemned it as freely as they would have done in commenting upon any proceeding in history in which they were totally unconcerned. Pitt's fervent patriotism, and hatred of the corruption which he identified with Walpole, prevailed over his sagacity, and influenced his passions at the expense of his reason.

In the course of a debate on the 10th of March, 1740, on Sir Charles Wager's bill for the better manning of the Royal Navy, Pitt delivered a speech of considerable vehemence, concluding with an attack on the Minister which brought up his brother, Horace Walpole the elder. The latter commented severely on Pitt's theatrical emotion and violence of gesture; adding that "formidable sounds and furious declamation, confident assertions and lofty periods, may affect the young and inexperienced; and perhaps the honourable gentleman may have contracted his habits of oratory more by conversing with those of his own age, than with such as have had more opportunities of acquiring knowledge, and more successful methods of communicating their sentiments." As soon as Walpole had concluded, Pitt sprang to his feet, and replied:—"The atrocious crime of being a young man, which the honourable gentleman has with such spirit and decency charged upon me, I

shall attempt neither to palliate nor deny ; but content myself with wishing that I may be one of those whose follies may cease with their youth, and not of that number who are ignorant in spite of experience. Whether youth can be imputed to any man as a reproach, I will not assume the province of determining. But surely age may become justly contemptible, if the opportunities which it brings have past away without improvement, and vice appears to prevail when the passions have subsided. The wretch who, after having seen the consequences of a thousand errors, continues still to blunder, and whose age has only added obstinacy to stupidity, is surely the object of either abhorrence or contempt, and deserves not that his grey head should secure him from insults. Much more is he to be abhorred, who, as he has advanced in age, has receded from virtue, and becomes more wicked with his temptation ; who prostitutes himself for money which he cannot enjoy, and spends the remains of his life in the ruin of this country.*

In the great debate against Walpole in 1741 Pitt conspicuously distinguished himself, and in the final struggle which preceded the Minister's resignation the Opposition was largely indebted to his powerful assistance. After Walpole's downfall, the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Chancellor Hardwicke made an effort to form an administration on a Whig basis. But Pitt and his immediate followers privately communicated with

* This speech is given in Chandler's 'Parliamentary Debates.' How far it correctly represents what the orator really said cannot be determined ; but no doubt the general outline is faithfully preserved.

Walpole, offering to shelter him from prosecution if he would employ his influence with the King in their behalf. Walpole was well aware that "the Boys," as he called them, would avail him nothing without Pulteney and Carteret, whereas if the two chiefs of the Opposition agreed to his terms, he would not need the assistance of "the Boys." Such, at least, is the statement put forward by Coxe, and adopted by Macaulay; but it has always seemed to us obscure and doubtful, and Pitt's reasons for negotiating with the deposed Minister are by no means apparent.

In the new administration no place was found for Pitt, and he continued, therefore, in Opposition, advocating the motion for a Committee of Inquiry into Walpole's supposed delinquencies, and afterwards supporting the Bill of Indemnity to Witnesses which that Committee demanded. If it be true that Pitt had previously offered to secure him from accusation, his conduct cannot be defended on any ground of political morality. The blot on his fame cannot be erased. We can but deplore it, and wonder at the general corruption when the loftiest and most disinterested statesman of his time saw in such conduct nothing to regret or to be ashamed of.

Against Carteret [afterwards Earl Granville] Pitt next directed the thunders of his eloquence. He complained, and not without truth, that the interests of England were sacrificed to those of Hanover, and he denounced with equal ability and energy the practice of subsidising Hanoverian troops with English money.

In December, 1742, we find him speaking on this favourite subject : —

“ It does not appear,” he said, “ that either justice or policy required us to engage in the quarrels of the Continent,”—a maxim of policy more in favour with our statesmen now than it was in Pitt’s days,—“ that there was any need of forming an army in the Low Countries ; or that, in order to form an army, auxiliaries were necessary.

“ But, not to dwell upon disputable points, I think it may justly be concluded that the measures of our Ministry have been ill-concerted, because it is undoubtedly wrong to squander the public money without effect ; to pay armies only to be a show to our friends and a scorn to our enemies.

“ The troops of Hanover, whom we are now expected to pay, marched into the Low Countries, where they still remain. They marched to the place most distant from the enemy, least in danger of an attack, and most strongly fortified, if any attack had been designed. They have, therefore, no other claim to be paid than that they left their own country for a place of greater security. It is always reasonable to judge of the future by the past, and therefore it is probable that, next year, the services of these troops will not be of equal importance with those for which they are now to be paid. And I shall not be surprised if, after another such glorious campaign, the opponents of the Ministry should be challenged to propose better men, and be told that the money of this nation cannot be more properly employed than in hiring Hanoverians to eat and sleep. . . .

“That we should inviolably observe our treaties, and observe them though every other nation should disregard them; that we should show an example of fidelity to mankind, and stand firm in the practice of virtue, though we should stand alone, I readily allow.” [Here Pitt enunciated a maxim which has ever since been acted upon by English statesmen.] “I am, therefore, far from advising that we should recede from our stipulations whatever we may suffer by adhering to them or that we should neglect the support of the Pragmatic Sanction, however we may be at present embarrassed, or however disadvantageous may be its assertion. . . .

“If our assistance [to the Empress Maria Theresa] be an act of honesty, and granted in consequence of treaties, why may it not be equally required of Hanover? If it be an act of generosity, why should this nation alone be obliged to sacrifice her own interest to that of others? or why should the Elector of Hanover exert his liberality at the expense of Great Britain?

“It is now too apparent, that this powerful, this great, this formidable nation, is considered only as a province to a despicable Electorate; and that, in consequence of a plan formed long ago, and invariably pursued, these troops are hired only to drain us of our money. That they have hitherto been of no use to Great Britain or to Austria is evident beyond a doubt; and therefore it is plain that they are only retained for the purpose of Hanover. . . .

“To dwell upon all the instances of partiality which have been shown, and the yearly visits which have been paid to that *delightful* country; to reckon up all the

sums that have been spent to aggrandise and enrich it, would be an irksome and invidious task ; invidious to those who are afraid to be told the truth, and irksome to those who are unwilling to hear of the dishonour and injuries of their country. I shall dwell no longer upon this unpleasing subject than to express my hope that we shall no longer suffer ourselves to be deceived and oppressed ; that we shall at length perform our duty as representatives of the people ; and by refusing to ratify this contract, show, that however the interests of Hanover have been preferred by the Ministers, the Parliament pays no regard but to the interests of Great Britain.”*

There is a true patriotic ring in this spirited speech ; and it is easy to understand that it would produce a powerful effect, when spoken by so consummate a master of the art of oratory as was Pitt.

In July, 1743, the Earl of Wilmington died, and was succeeded at the Treasury by Henry Pelham. The latter had long enjoyed Walpole's confidence, and now owed his promotion to Walpole's influence. Aged forty-seven, he had been twenty-four years in Parliament, and had served the State in several responsible offices. As Lord Stanhope remarks, he had formed himself on his master's model, but was as greatly inferior to him in ability as he was superior to him in caution. He was a ready and effective speaker ; a thorough man of business ; me-

* The art of reporting had not yet been introduced, and the debates of Parliament, as the reader knows, were not allowed to be published. Of Pitt's great speeches, therefore, we can form but an imperfect idea. They were compiled from notes made by persons who heard them delivered.

thodical, industrious, and strictly honest; but timid, of an irritable temper, and afraid of responsibility. Though far from claiming to rank with our more eminent statesmen, he deserves to be classed amongst our most respectable ministers.

It is impossible to mention Pelham without thinking of his brother, the Duke of Newcastle. He was born in 1693, and as the heir of his uncle, John Hollis, Duke of Newcastle, assumed after the death of that nobleman, the surname of Hollis. His devotion to the interests of the House of Hanover was rewarded in 1715, by the revival of the dukedom in his favour. In 1724, he was appointed a secretary of state, and thenceforward he clung to office like a political Vicar of Bray. He is unquestionably the most ridiculous and eccentric figure in the gallery of English politicians. In the pages of Smollett and Horace Walpole, he stands before us a thing to wonder at and despise. At one time we see him, his face covered with lather, rushing out of his dressing-room to embrace the Moorish envoy. At another, he forces his way into the sick-room of the Duke of Grafton, and slobbers over his plasters.* Or we

* The story of the Duke of Grafton's plasters is thus told by Horace Walpole—"The Duke of Grafton still languishes; the Duke of Newcastle has so pestered him with political visits that the physicians ordered him to be excluded; yet he forced himself into the house. The Duke's gentleman would not admit him into the bedchamber, saying his Grace was asleep. Newcastle protested he would go in on tip-toe and only look at him—he rushed in, clattered his heels to waken him, and then fell upon the bed, kissing and hugging him. Grafton waked: 'What's here?'—'Only I, my dear Lord'—Buss, buss, buss, buss!—'God! how can you be such a beast to kiss such a creature as I am, all over plasters! get along, get along!'

see him in the presence-chamber, shuffling along with uneasy rapid gait, and stuttering his silly nothings into the ears of the first man he encounters. "He abounded in fulsome caresses, and in hysterical tears. His oratory resembled that of Justice Shallow. He was a living, moving, taking caricature." Only in the days of oligarchical government, when a head might be without brains so long as it wore a ducal coronet, could such a man have held high, even the highest, place in the ministry of a great nation. Lord Chesterfield was accustomed to say of him that he lost an hour in the morning, and spent all the day looking after it. It is recorded that in reply to a suggestion that Annapolis should be made a military post, he exclaimed:—"Oh!—yes—yes—to be sure—Annapolis must be defended—troops must be sent to Annapolis. Pray, where is Annapolis?" And again:—"Cape Breton an island! wonderful!—show it me in the map. So it is, sure enough. My dear Sir, you always bring us good news. I must go and tell the King that Cape Breton is an island." The story is probably *ben trovato* rather than true; but it enables us to understand the character of the shambling, stuttering Duke, and the estimation in which he was held by his contemporaries. The secret of his influence was to be found in the number of rotten boroughs which he held in his hand, in his assiduous devotion to political

and turned about and went to sleep—Newcastle hurries home, tells the mad Duchess that the Duke of Grafton was certainly light-headed, for he had not known him, frightens her into fits, and then was forced to send for Dr. Shaw."—*Letters to Sir Horace Mann*, iii. 259.

intrigue, his meanness, and his unparalleled duplicity. He was jealous of his own brother, and ready to betray his own colleagues.

In October, 1744, while Pitt was still launching his thunderbolts in the troubled air of the House of Commons, the famous Sarah of Marlborough died. By her will she bequeathed to Pitt a sum of £10,000, in consideration of "the noble defence he had made for the support of the laws of England, and to prevent the ruin of his country." Possibly he was also recommended to her favour by his fierce attacks upon Carteret, whom the Duchess regarded with a strong antipathy. Carteret, now Lord Granville, had been driven from the Ministry by the two Pelhams, who proceeded to form their administration on what the wits of the day nick-named "the Broad Bottom." They negotiated an alliance with Chesterfield, Gower, and Pitt; and it was agreed that all should combine against Granville ("that sole execrable minister," as Pitt called him) and Bath; then the leaders of Opposition, whether Whig or Tory, should as far as possible be admitted into office; and that Pitt's aversion, the Hanoverian contingent, should be dismissed. To Chesterfield and Pitt the King strongly objected; but the former was made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. The latter, to facilitate the new arrangements, resigned his place in the Prince's Household. The King, however, continued obstinate, resenting deeply the great orator's reflections on his Hanoverians; and all that Pelham and Newcastle could do was no more than to express their belief that, in time, they would succeed in subduing or mitigating the King's prejudice.

In January, 1745, Pitt gave a public proof of his confidence in the new Ministry. Though seriously ill with gout, he insisted on being carried to the House when the Secretary at War (Sir W. Yonge) moved a grant for continuing the war in Flanders; and leaning upon his crutches, he supported the motion in one of his greatest speeches. It was true, he said, that last year he had opposed this motion; but *then* a malignant influence had swayed the King's councils. *Then*, the Minister's desire seemed to be, to multiply war upon war, to increase the expenditure, and to support the House of Austria in such Quixotic efforts as the recovery of the *avulsa membra imperii*, without reference to the actual interests of Great Britain. But *now*, the object was, by a close connection with Holland, to offer equitable terms of peace, both to friends and foes, without continuing the war a moment longer than was needful for the maintenance of our own rights and those of our allies. *Now* England was free of that Minister who, when not ten men in the nation were willing to follow him, supported himself in the Closet on that broken reed, a dependence on foreign princes. He proceeded to compliment Mr. Pelham on his true patriotism and capacity for business, and commended his Ministry for introducing moderate and healing measures, which tended to place the King at the head of his people. He thought "a dawn of salvation" to his country was breaking forth, and was resolved to follow it as far as it would lead him. "I should, indeed, consider myself," he exclaimed, "as the greatest dupe in the world, if those now at the helm did not mean the honour of their

master and the good of the nation. If I find myself deceived, nothing will be left but to act with an honest despair!" Pitt's eloquence on this occasion seems to have borne down all opposition.

The year 1745 was marked by the last Jacobite rebellion, that romantic episode of history which reads more like an old chivalric legend than a sober eighteenth-century narrative. Prince Charles Edward at first seemed destined to recover the crown of his ancestors, and after defeating the royal army at Preston Pans, and capturing Carlisle, pursued his victorious march as far as Derby. There his good fortune deserted him. Alarmed at the apathy of the population, and fearing to be surrounded by superior forces, the Highland chiefs insisted on a retreat; and the baffled Prince dispirited and ashamed recrossed the borders, pursued by the Duke of Cumberland. It was at this crisis that the English Ministry determined on a domestic revolution. The two Pelhams observed with distrust the confidence which the King bestowed on Granville. They had discovered his intrigues in many quarters, and had good reason for believing that at a favourable opportunity he would be recalled to the head of affairs. They resolved on anticipating his manœuvres, and suddenly demanded that Pitt, who was so valuable as a friend, and would be so formidable as a foe, should be made Secretary at War. Influenced by Granville and the Earl of Bath, and by his personal antipathy, the King refused. Lord Harrington immediately resigned; and was followed on the same day (February 16th), by the Duke of Newcastle, on the next by Henry Pelham, and

within a week by all the white staves and gold keys. Lords Granville and Bath were thereupon charged to form a ministry ; and their plots seemed crowned with success. But, as Horace Walpole remarks, they had forgotten one little point, which was to secure a majority in both Houses. They failed to secure the assistance of any man of reputation or influence, and found that their party consisted of about thirty lords and eighty members of the House of Commons.* In forty hours the Granville Ministry ceased to be ; and the Pelhams were reinstated, with Pitt as Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, and shortly afterwards, Paymaster of the Forces.

This defeat made no impression on the brilliant, aspiring, but mercurial Granville : "He is as jolly as ever," writes Horace Walpole, "laughs and drinks, and owns it was mad, and vows he would do it again to-morrow ; it would not be quite so safe, indeed, to try it soon again, for the triumphant party are not at all in the humour to be turned out every time his lordship has drunk a bottle too much ; and that House of Commons that he could not make do for him, would do to send him to the Tower till he was sober." Walpole adds :—"This was the very worst time he could have selected, when the fears of men had made them throw

* This 'Three-Days' Ministry was satirized in a penny pamphlet, entitled 'A History of the Long Administration,' and in numerous caricatures, one of the best of which, 'The Noble Game of Bob-cherry, as it was Lately Play'd by Some Unlucky Boys at the Crown, in St. James's Street,' became very popular. The "boys" are Winchelsea, Bath, Granville, and Chief Justice Willes. Pitt and Walpole are represented as laughing at their vain efforts to catch the cherries of office.

themselves absolutely into all measures of Government to secure the Government itself; and that temporary no strength of Pelham had my Lord Granville contrived to fix to him; and people will be glad to ascribe to the merit and virtue of the Ministry, what they would be ashamed to own, but was really the effect of their own apprehensions. It was a good idea of somebody, when no man would accept a place under the new system, that Granville and Bath were met going about the streets, calling *odd man*! as the hackney chairmen do when they want a partner. This little faction of Lord Granville goes by the name of the *Grandvillains* . . . You will wonder at not having it notified to you by Lord Granville himself, as is customary for new Secretaries of State: when they mentioned to him writing to Italy, he said—‘To Italy! no; before the courier can get thither, I shall be out again.’ It absolutely makes one laugh: as serious as the consequences might be, it is impossible to hate a politician of such jovial good humour.” But it is equally impossible to doubt that Pelham, though of inferior parts, was a safer and more capable minister than this good-humoured, jovial, accomplished, but unsteady earl.*

* The downfall of the ‘Three-Days’ Ministry was very grievous to many disappointed place-hunters, among others to Hanbury Williams, who poured out his insults upon Pitt. Here is a specimen:—

“Did not the band
Their King withstand;
And bring him low
As King could go?”

Tho' France did threat
The royal seat:
Tho' rebels dire
Spread sword and fire ;
Careless of all
That could befall
The crown or realm,
They quit the helm :
Cabal, combine,
Revile, resign ;
One, one and all,
From London Wall,
To Prim cock-crower of Whitehall."

Works, ii., 164, 165.

II.

PITT's official career as Paymaster of the Forces was marked by a contempt of gain, unfortunately very rare among the politicians of his time. The emoluments of the office were principally derived from certain perquisites, such as the interest of a large sum of money which the Paymaster was allowed to hold in his hands, and an allowance on the subsidies granted by Parliament to foreign Powers. These he absolutely refused to accept. He would take nothing but the moderate salary attached to the post. Such conduct showed that he was proof against all sordid temptations, if not exempt from the "last infirmity of noble minds." But, in truth, it would be unfair to judge his conduct in accepting a place from Pelham, by the moral standard we now apply to English statesmen. The distinctions of Party were still obscure. The principles which should govern ministerial policy were still undefined, and it was considered no disgrace to support, when in office, the measures which had been denounced when the speaker was in opposition. We nowadays profess to embody our political doctrine in the maxim, "Measures not Men," though our actions frequently ill-accord with our profession; but in the Hanoverian reign the politician's watchword was "Men not Measures." It is to the honour of Pitt that, on the whole, he rose superior to his contemporaries in the motives

which guided his political conduct; and that he consistently adhered to a course actuated by a steadfast regard for the national interests; though apt, on minor points, to yield to passing impulses and personal considerations.

For eight years peace reigned in the English Cabinet, which Pelham guided with a prudence and a skill not always acknowledged by historians. The Opposition dwindled into the shadow of a shade; the death of Prince Frederick of Wales in 1756 depriving it of its last feeble prop. The country daily increased in prosperity and contentment; and even in the Scottish Highlands the influence of law and order was making itself felt. Had Pelham lived, this halcyon condition of affairs might have lasted still longer. As an administrator he displayed great ability, but much of the success of his Government was due to the eagerness with which, unlike Walpole, he endeavoured to secure the co-operation of the ablest. He gave reason to none to attach themselves to the Opposition. And he had no cause to fear that any of them would supplant him. He knew that their mutual jealousies constituted a sufficient safeguard. Thus, Harry Fox and Murray and Pitt, though differing widely in feelings and sentiments, readily acted under his supremacy, while neither would have yielded to the dictation of the others.

William Murray, afterwards Earl of Mansfield, was scarcely inferior, perhaps, to Pitt himself in intellectual power; but he had none of his enthusiasm, energy, courage, and resolution. A similar distinction was to be seen in their oratory. Murray excelled in lucidity

of statement and force of argument; but he was incapable of those bursts of glowing eloquence with which his great rival awed or charmed the House of Commons.* His oratory resembled a full and tranquil river, which rolls onward with even current, always transparent, and never chafed by rock or tempest; Pitt's was like a mighty torrent, which was sometimes turbid and obscure, sometimes spent itself in wayward digressions, but when it poured forth in all its strength was irresistible. Horace Walpole, on hearing the two orators some years before, had remarked, "In all appearance they will be great rivals;" and Murray would probably have run his competitor close in the race for power had he not, with characteristic caution, abandoned the political for the judicial career, and became Chief Justice instead of First Lord of the Treasury. The change was one for which England had reason to be grateful; since in Lord Mansfield we must recognise the founder of our commercial law.

Murray was born in the ancient palace of Scone, near Perth, on the 2nd of March, 1705. He was the eleventh child of the fifth Viscount Stourmont, a Scotch nobleman of ancient blood, but small estate. In 1718 he was sent to Westminster School, then under the mastership of Atterbury, and in 1723 he entered Christ

* "His eloquence was of an argumentative metaphysical cast," says Lord Shelburne," and his great art always appeared to me to be to watch his opportunity to introduce a proposition unperceived, when his cause was ever so bad, afterwards found a true argument upon it, of which nobody could be more capable, and then give way to his imagination in which he was by no means wanting, nor in scholarship, particularly classical learning, thanks to Westminster."—(*Life*, by Lord E. Fitzmaurice, i. 88).

Church, Oxford, with a foundation scholarship. In 1724, through the liberality of Lord Foley, he became a member of Lincoln's Inn, and six years later he was called to the bar. For a time he worked hard and suffered much; but gradually his remarkable abilities obtained a wide recognition, and his skilful conduct of one or two difficult cases placed him, in 1738, at the head of the bar. In the same year he married Lady Elizabeth Finch, a daughter of the Earl of Winchelsea. The marriage was a happy one, and it materially assisted Murray's advancement. In 1742 he was appointed Solicitor-General, and entered the House of Commons; where his persuasive eloquence and rare mental gifts soon gave him a prominent position. In 1754 he succeeded to the office of Attorney-General and undertook the leadership of the House of Commons.

Pitt's other rival, Henry Fox, has suffered considerably in renown through the greater and more enduring fame of his illustrious son, Charles James Fox, the Whig champion of "peace, of truth, and of liberty."

Henry Fox, the son of Sir Stephen Fox, was born in the same year as Murray, and belonged to the same college at Oxford. But while Murray's youth was laborious and distinguished, Fox's was sullied by the wildest dissipation, which so impaired his moderate fortune that he was compelled to retire to the Continent. Having secured the favour of Lord Sunderland by his social fascinations and his abilities, he was returned to Parliament in 1735 as member for Hindon. From the

first he seems, as Chesterfield says, to have had not the least notion of a regard for the public good or the constitution, but despised their cares as the objects of narrow minds. Hence he never won the confidence of the people, though he contrived to hold office in a large number of administrations, Whig and Tory. Adopting the side of Sir Robert Walpole, he obtained in 1737 the place of Surveyor at the Board of Works. On Walpole's retirement he rose to a Lordship of the Treasury. His political influence being increased, in 1744, by his clandestine marriage with Lady Charlotte Lennox, daughter of the Duke of Richmond, he became, two years later, Secretary at War; an office which he held throughout the Pelham administration. Fox was an able debater and a politician of great sagacity; courageous, prompt and resolute, of a fine temper, and as true a friend as he was a thorough-going partisan. No man, it has been said, was more warmly or justly beloved by his family or by his associates. He might have risen to the foremost place in the State but for his want of political morality, and his confusion of Statecraft with Statesmanship. "He had been trained," says Macaulay, "in a bad political school—in a school, the doctrines of which were, that political virtue is the mere coquetry of political prostitution, that every patriot has his price, that Government can be carried on only by means of corruption, and that the State is given as a prey to statesmen."

On the death of Pelham, March 6th, 1754, the long truce which had been maintained between the rival politicians

of the day was immediately dissolved. The Duke of Newcastle, by virtue of his parliamentary influence, succeeded to the Treasury; but who was to lead the House of Commons? The Duke, unlike his brother, mistrusted every man of genius, and was so greedy of office and patronage that he was unwilling to share them even with the staunchest supporter. What he wanted was a man who would do the work and ask for none of the power; who would consent to be, and to act as, a mere agent or subordinate. Newcastle knew that Pitt was not such a man; and besides, the King was only too anxious to get rid of him. It was useless to apply to Murray; he would not accept the terms, and, moreover, he was anxious to abandon a political career. In this dilemma Newcastle turned to Fox, who was not likely to be very scrupulous. The high contracting parties, after some discussion, agreed to the following conditions:—Fox was to be Secretary of State, with the lead of the House of Commons; but the disposal of the secret service money, that is, the bribery of members of Parliament, was to be left to Newcastle, though Fox was to be brought acquainted with the mode of expenditure. This agreement was concluded on the 12th of March. Next morning the Duke overturned it. "My brother," he said, "when he was at the Treasury, never told anybody what he did with the secret-service money. No more will I." But then Pelham was not only First Lord of the Treasury, but leader of the Commons; and it was unnecessary for him to take any person into his confidence. "How," said Fox, "how can I talk to gentlemen when I do not

know which of them have received gratification, and which have not? And who," he added, "is to have the disposal of places?" "I myself," returned the Duke. "How, then, am I to manage the House of Commons?" "Oh! let the members of the House of Commons come to me." It was impossible for Fox to accept conditions so humiliating; and the leadership of the House was placed in the hands of one of the dullest of men, Sir Thomas Robinson. "Sir Thomas Robinson lead us!" exclaimed Pitt, "the Duke might as well send his jack-boot to lead us." The result was exactly what Newcastle had aimed at. "He is alone and all powerful," writes Horace Walpole; "and I suppose smiles at those who thought that we must be governed by a succession of geniuses. Which of the Popes was it, who being chosen *for* his insufficiency, said, 'I could not have believed that it was so easy to govern!'"

Pitt and Fox were naturally driven to make common cause with one another against the predominance of the incapables. The former hurled his invectives against the First Minister; the latter expended his scorn and bitterness on Sir Thomas Robinson. Yet, strange to say, the assailers and the assailed all belonged to the same administration! The Duke, however, durst not dismiss his two powerful but rebellious lieutenants; and could only stutter and shrug his shoulders, when Pitt electrified the House by asking, if they were prepared to degenerate into a little assembly, serving no other purpose than to register the arbitrary

edicts of one too powerful subject? * It was evident that something must be done; and Newcastle turned to Fox. He was offered a seat in the Cabinet, on condition that he abandoned his hostile attitude. After some slight hesitation he accepted the offer, and his acceptance dissolved the connection between himself and Pitt, who to the last regarded his treachery with disgust (January, 1755).

Pitt had strengthened his position by his marriage, on the 6th of November, with Lady Hester Grenville, the sister of Earl Temple. She was a woman well-fitted by her superiority of mind and manners to be the wife of such a man. In the course of the session of '55 Newcastle made an attempt to gain Pitt's support; but Pitt would hear of no arrangement which did not bring him into the Cabinet. And he could well afford to wait. The threatening posture of affairs convinced him that, before long, his services would be sought on his own terms. The relations between France and England had become so strained that England began to arm, and the old hatreds revived with increased force. The King's anxiety for the safety of Hanover was excessive. Russia was subsidised to menace Prussia, and several German princes were hired to find soldiers. These, however, were measures which not even the anti-Gallicanism of the nation could render popular; and in the House of Commons a strong re-

* Fox himself writes that "displeased, as well as pleased, allowed it to be the finest speech that was ever made; and it was observed that by his two first periods he brought the House to a silence and attention that you might have heard a pin drop."—*Lord Waldegrave's Memoirs* (Appendix).

sentment arose against them, which was not lessened by the knowledge that the young Prince of Wales also disapproved of them. In a panic of terror Newcastle opened negotiations with Pitt through the Lord Chancellor; and when these came to nothing, requested a personal interview. On the subsidising system, however, Pitt stood firm. He protested against it in the warmest language. The Duke insisted that the King's honour was pledged in the case of Hesse Cassel and of Russia. Pitt replied, that for the King's honour he had a deep regard, but that the system of subsidies was so fatal that he could not think even of submitting to that with Hesse, unless Ministers solemnly engaged that nothing of the same kind should again be attempted; and unless it was understood and declared on both sides that it was given and received as a mark of affection from a ruined nation, to save the honour of the King, who had entered into a rash engagement. As for two subsidies, it was the same as twenty; and no persuasion should induce him to support them. The baffled Duke resorted to Fox, who was made Secretary of State, and leader of the House of Commons with full authority; while Sir Thomas Robinson retired into obscurity, carrying with him a handsome pension.

On the 13th of November, Parliament met, and for the first time for several years presented the spectacle of a strong and united Opposition; an Opposition guided by the greatest orator of the age, and supported by the young and popular heir-apparent; and, as Horace Walpole puts it, "what was never seen before, an Opposition in Administration." The debate on the Address

was a memorable struggle. The House was very full—nearly 420. members being present,—and sat from three in the afternoon until five the next morning. The speeches were worthy of the occasion, and included that remarkable address which procured for him who delivered it the *sobriquet* of “Single-speech Hamilton.” As for Pitt, he surpassed himself. He spoke with all the fire and passion that had marked his oratory before he entered office.

“The present war,” he said, “was undertaken for the long-injured, long-neglected, long-forgotten people of America. Hanover had been excepted as an ally by the Act of Limitation; not so much for fear of prejudices as on account of its locality. But we are told that we must assist the Hanoverians out of justice and gratitude. Out of justice! We can produce a charter against it. Out of gratitude, indeed, we ought, if Hanover has done anything in our quarrel to draw down upon her the resentments of France. These expressions [in the Address] were unparliamentary, unconstitutional. With all his duty to his Majesty, he must say that the King owes a supreme service to his people. Would our ancestors have used adulation like this? The very paragraph ought to be taken notice of, and punished. Besides, is there anything in the speech respecting Hanover that calls for this resolution? Grotius declares that it is not necessary even *socium defendere si nulla spes boni exitus*.” Then, turning with an air of the greatest contempt towards Sir George Lyttleton, he said, “a gentleman near me has talked, too, of writers on the law of nations. Nature is the best writer; she will teach us to be men,

and not truckle to power. The noble lord who moved the address seemed inspired with it. I (he continued) who am at a distance from that *sanctum sanctorum* whither the priest goes for inspiration,—I, who travel through a desert, and am overwhelmed with mountains of obscurity, cannot so easily catch a gleam to direct me to the beauties of these negotiations. But there are parts of this address that do not seem to come from the same quarter with the rest. I cannot unravel this mystery—yes, (cried Mr. Pitt, suddenly raising his hand to his forehead),—I, too, am inspired! Now, it strikes me! I remember at Lyons to have seen the conflux of the Rhone [Fox] and the Saône [Newcastle]; the one a gentle, feeble, languid stream, and though languid, of no depth; the other, a boisterous and impetuous torrent. But they meet at last; and long may they continue united, to the comfort of each other, and to the glory, honour, security of the nation!”

Pitt spoke for an hour and a half, and carried with him 105 votes against 311. It is long, remarks Walpole, since the arts of persuasion were artful enough to persuade; rhetoric was invented before places and commissions. A few days afterwards, Pitt, with Legge and George Grenville, received their dismissal (November 20th). As the “great Commoner” was known to have but a small fortune, he was offered, and Earl Temple persuaded him to accept, a pension of £1000 a year.

During the remainder of the session Pitt spoke frequently; and his popularity and influence, both in Parliament and the country, increased so largely that it was clear he could not be much longer debarred from

the highest place. And, indeed, the critical condition of affairs called for a genius as vast as his, and a spirit as valiant and inflexible. The war was being waged with evil fortune to England. Minorca was captured by the Duke of Richelieu; and Admiral Byng, who had been despatched to relieve Port Mahon, falling in with the French fleet, hesitated to engage it.* Our seamen had not yet been fired by the example of a Jervis and a Nelson. The country was moved to a paroxysm of indignation by the disgrace that had befallen its arms. Men went about lamenting the degeneracy of the race, and protesting that they and their brothers were cowards, fit only to be enslaved. Caricatures and libels, in which the King and his Ministers were treated with the utmost freedom, passed from hand to hand.† The walls were covered with furious placards. The great cities and the counties sent up addresses of remonstrance to the Throne. The Ministers were buffeted in a storm of rage and contempt, and Newcastle began to tremble, not only

* The French admiral was just as unwilling. Hence the following epigram:—

“ We have lately been told
Of two admirals bold,
Who engaged in a terrible fight :
They met after noon,
Which I think was too soon,
As they both ran away before night.”

† Such as ‘A Rueful Story; or, Britain in Tears, being the Conduct of Admiral B—g . . . London. Printed by Boatswain Haul-up, a broken-hearted Sailor,’ and ‘The Devil’s Dance, set to French Music,’ in which Fox, Byng, and Newcastle were represented with cloven hoofs, dancing upon papers inscribed, ‘Justice,’ ‘Honesty,’ ‘Law,’ ‘Magna Charta,’ ‘Port Mahon,’ etc.

for his place but his neck. Fox, fearing that he might be sacrificed to save the Duke, and disgusted with his incapacity, suddenly resigned. An attempt to persuade Murray to take his place, though accompanied by great inducements, utterly failed; Murray having resolved on securing the vacant Chief Justiceship of the King's Bench. In his despair, Newcastle sent Lord Hardwicke to Pitt; but Pitt would join no administration from which Newcastle was not excluded. The Duke stuttered pitifully over this hard condition; but finding no one able or willing to encounter Pitt and Fox in the House of Commons, shed a torrent of tears, and resigned (November, 1756).

At the King's request, the Duke of Devonshire then endeavoured to form a Ministry. Taking the Treasury himself, he made Pitt Secretary of State, and leader of the Commons. Legge went back to the Exchequer; Lord Temple became First Lord of the Admiralty; George Grenville, Treasurer of the Navy; and the Great Seal was put into commission. This was obviously a temporary arrangement; and it endured, in fact, for scarcely five months. Pitt, one of the haughtiest of men, could ill brook the rudeness with which he and his brother-in-law were treated. Moreover, in the House of Commons, which had been elected under the Ducal auspices, he had but a scanty following. He succeeded, however, in carrying out his celebrated measure (which Walpole had approved, but not realized), of raising a couple of regiments among the Scotch Highlanders, and thus engaging their military ardour in support of the House of Hanover. The chief event of this

brief administration was the trial of Admiral Byng, who was found guilty—it is difficult to say of what particular crime*—was sentenced to death, and shot, as Voltaire wittily said, *pour encourager les autres* (March 14, 1757). Pitt made every effort to save him, risking his popularity with the country which, after our English fashion, demanded a victim.† He told the King that the House of Commons wished the Admiral to be pardoned. It was then that the King retorted:—"Sir, you have taught me to look for the sense of my subjects in another place than the House of Commons."

The difficulties and perplexities of the Ministry were terminated in April by their abrupt dismissal; and the shambling Duke was once more in the ascendant at St. James's. Then came a remarkable outbreak of popular indignation. The stocks fell rapidly. The Common Council of London met, and voted the freedom of the City to Pitt. Bath, Exeter, Yarmouth, Worcester, and other towns and cities followed the example. As Walpole said, "for some weeks it rained gold boxes"; and he preserves a couple of epigrams which throw some light on the bias of public sentiment:—

To the Nymph of Bath.

Mistaken Nymph, thy gifts withhold;
Pitt's virtuous soul despises gold:
Grant him thy boon peculiar, health;
He'll guard, not covet, Britain's wealth.

* He was sentenced under the 12th of the old Articles of War, but most unjustly. The sentence, however, was accompanied with a strong recommendation to mercy, which Newcastle, Hardwicke, and Fox disregarded.

† Sad to say, Murray (Lord Mansfield) was against the unfortunate Admiral, whose only crime was want of capacity.

These lines refer to Pitt's frequent visits to Bath to drink the waters.

Pitt and Fox.

The two great rivals London might content,
If what he values most to each she sent :
Ill was the franchise coupled with the box ;
Give Pitt the freedom, and the gold to Fox.

The opportunity was Pitt's, and he availed himself of it with chivalrous moderation. He loved power, no doubt, but only because with the power he believed he had the strength to save his country. The political outlook was dark and dreary enough to awaken all his patriotic sympathies. Never since the ignominious days of Charles the 2nd, and the Dutch war, had the fame and credit of England sunk so low. Never had so deep a depression taken hold of the national heart. "Pitt," as Macaulay finely says, "loved England as an Athenian loved the City of the Violet Crown ; as a Roman loved the City of the Seven Hills." He would not add, therefore, to its difficulties in order to gratify any desire of personal vengeance, however natural. What, then, was his position ? He enjoyed the confidence of the people ; but the people, as yet, were but imperfectly represented in their own House, and he could not depend upon a majority. He was poor ; he was a commoner ; he held no rotten boroughs in his hand ; the aristocracy sneered at him ; the King hated him. With all his genius and all his popularity he could not contend against such adverse influences. Yet it was impossible that any Government could stand without his support. A Ministry was formed by Lord Waldegrave, in which Fox was to be

Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Earl of Egremont, Secretary of State ; but it went out with startling celerity. The only possible solution of the problem, as Pitt saw, was a coalition between himself and the Duke of Newcastle. That such a man as the Duke, a man so morally and intellectually contemptible, " the scorn of the Court, the jest of the people," should be indispensable in such a crisis, may well move the historian's indignation ; while it shows how far the country was from having arrived at a reduction of the theory of constitutional government to practice.

A negotiation between the two men who represented respectively public opinion and parliamentary interest was conducted by Lords Mansfield and Hardwicke. It was soon completed, for Newcastle had learned by experience the necessity of Pitt's assistance. In June he returned to office as First Lord of the Treasury, while Pitt became Secretary of State, with the Leadership of the House of Commons, and the general control of military and foreign affairs.* Fox was gratified with the lucrative office of Paymaster of the Forces, and Legge was made Chancellor of the Exchequer. The new Ministry was strong in the House and strong in the country ; and once more the Opposition ceased to be aught else than a *nominis umbra*.

* At an audience which he had of the King, Pitt said :—" Sire, give me your confidence, and I will deserve it." To which the King replied :—" Deserve my confidence, and you shall have it." Eventually Pitt quite overcame the King's prejudice against him. In this he was probably helped by the favour of Lady Yarmouth, the King's mistress, which he had contrived to secure.

III.

FROM this period (July, 1757) Mr. Pitt's administration is properly to be dated. During the brief period in which he had previously held the seals, his weight in the Cabinet was so inconsiderable that no adequate encouragement was given to the measures which he originated. He was now, in reality, if not in name, chief minister, and the military dictator of the country. He disposed of its resources at pleasure; and despatched its fleets and armies where he chose. His first object was to infuse something of his own activity and enthusiasm into those on whom he relied to execute his daring conceptions.* He perceived that both the army and navy had sunk into a state of depression, and accomplished nothing because they dared nothing. To rouse their energies it was necessary to give them work. He began with expeditions against various parts of the French coast; and successes at Cherbourg, St. Maloes, and Rochefort, though inconsiderable in themselves, called up a new and more vigorous life in both services, and gave them confidence in the energy, genius, and patriotism of the new Minister. But it was no part of

* Colonel Barré, at that time no friend of Pitt's, justly said that Pitt possessed the happy talent of transfusing his own zeal into the souls of all those who were to have a share in carrying his projects into execution. No man, he added, ever went into the great Minister's closet, who did not feel himself, if possible, braver at his return than when he entered.

his policy to make efforts on a great scale in Europe. He knew too well that England as a military power could not cope with the great continental kingdoms. His object was to maintain Prussia as a counterpoise against Austria and France; and recognising the military talents of the Prussian King, Frederick the Great, he promised him and gave him his heartiest support. Refusing to ratify the Convention of Closter Zeven,* which placed Prussia at the feet of her enemies, he supplied Frederick with what Frederick wanted, money. It may seem inconsistent that Pitt who had once so strongly protested against the subsidy system should adopt it on a colossal scale; but apart from the fact that genius can afford to be inconsistent, Pitt could reply that he did not waste his subsidies on half-a-dozen small and impotent German principalities, which did and could do nothing, but expended them profitably in aid of a Power which was struggling, indirectly, for the freedom of Europe. And he could point, as a justification of his policy, to the battles of Rossbach and Leuthen, in the former of which the French army was annihilated, while the latter liberated Silesia from the forces of Austria.†

In July, 1758, an English fleet captured Louisbourg, and reduced the island of Cape Breton. French America

* This Convention (September 8, 1757), was signed by the Duke of Cumberland and the Duke of Richelieu. In accordance with it, the Hanoverian army laid down their arms, and the French were left free to crush the Prussian King.

† It should be noted here, that, in 1757, Clive laid the foundation of our Indian Empire by the victory of Plassy.

ceased to be formidable. The French fleet entrusted with its defence was destroyed. The captured standards were carried in triumphal procession from Kensington Palace to St. Paul's, where they were suspended, amidst the clang of drums, the roar of cannon, and the huzzas of the crowd. Congratulatory addresses poured in from all the great towns. Parliament was lavish with monuments and votes of thanks, and voted the most liberal supplies in an excess of loyal gratitude.

The tide of success flowed more and more freely. In 1759, Admiral Boscawen defeated the French fleet off Cape Lagos. Goree was captured; so was Guadeloupe; and the French were driven from Ticonderoga and Niagara. Finally, the supremacy of the English was established in America by Wolfe's great victory on the Heights of Abraham. To this victory Pitt could lay some claim, as he had planned the expedition and selected the General. His sagacity had discerned the heroism and genius "which lay hidden beneath the awkward manner and occasional gasconade of the young soldier of thirty-three," whose brief but brilliant career was fitly closed by a hero's death. With wonderful patience and resolution Wolfe had led his flotilla up the St. Lawrence, and anchored it beneath the guns of Quebec. But no efforts could entice the French commander, Montcalm, from his strong position on the almost precipitous cliffs which there overhang the river. Suffering from disease, Wolfe saw his men sinking into the apathy of despair, when he determined on a desperate manœuvre. He descended the St. Lawrence to a point at the base of the Heights of Abraham, where his scouts

had discovered a steep, narrow path leading to the summit. The oars were muffled, and the dead silence of night was unbroken except by the voice of the young commander, as he softly repeated the stanzas of Gray's 'Elegy,' observing as he closed, "I had rather be the author of that poem than take Quebec." But he was the first to leap on shore; the first to clamber up the narrow path where no two men could go abreast. With incredible difficulty the ascent was accomplished, and Wolfe's small army at daybreak mustered in front of the walls of Quebec. As he led his grenadiers to the charge, he received a musket-shot in his wrist, but quietly binding his handkerchief over the wound, continued to advance. In less than half an hour the enemy began to waver. Wolfe pressed upon them with levelled bayonets. A second shot struck him in the upper part of the abdomen. Still he cheered on his troops. A third shot penetrated his right breast. "Support me," he said to an officer near him; "let not my brave soldiers see me drop. 'The day is ours; keep it.'" As the French broke and fled, he was carried to the rear. "They run," cried a soldier, who was holding the bleeding general in his arms. "Who run?" he exclaimed with failing breath. "The French; they are in rapid retreat down the hill." "Then, I thank God; I die contented."

The story of Wolfe's heroic death, as it circulated over England, completed that work of renovation which Pitt's ardour had begun. Our soldiers and seamen learned to believe in themselves, and to despise their enemies. They went into battle assured of victory, and

victory was wooed and won. In November the triumph of the British arms seemed to be consummated by Admiral Hawke's defeat of the French at Quiberon, Nov. 20th. In truth, the navy of France was swept from the seas, where, only two years before, it had reigned supreme. "Ce royaume," says Voltaire, "n'a pu essuyer de si grands désastres sans perdre encore tous les vaisseaux qu'il envoyait pour les prévenir; à peine une flotte était-elle en mer qu'elle était ou prise ou détruite: on construisait des vaisseaux à la hâte; c'était travailler pour l'Angleterre, dont ils devenait bientôt la proie." Walpole writes in great good humour:—"I really believe the French will come hither now, for they can be safe nowhere else. If the King of Prussia should be totally undone in Germany we can afford to give him an appanage, as a younger son of England, of some hundred thousand miles on the Ohio. Sure universal monarchy was never so put to shame as that of France! What a figure do they make! They seem to have no ministers, no generals, no soldiers!" Again, referring to Hawke's victory, he says: * "Thus we wind up this wonderful year! Who that died three years ago and could revive, would believe it? . . . One is forced to ask every

* From a letter of Walpole's, a few weeks later, we get a glimpse of Pitt's domestic affairs:—"Mr. Pitt is not only a most ingenious young man [this was Pitt's nephew], but a most amiable one: he has already acted in the most noble style—I don't mean that he took a quarter of Quebec, or invaded a bit of France, or has spoken in the House of Commons better than Demosthenes's nephew; but he has an odious father [Pitt's elder brother], and has insisted in glorious cuttings off of entails on himself, that his father's debts might be paid, and his sisters provided for."

morning what victory there is, for fear of missing one." And all this military glory, and all these extensive conquests, had been won without injury to the commercial interests of the country, which exhibited every sign of unusual wealth and prosperity. The importance of some of our greatest manufacturing and commercial towns dates from this period; and the general opinion of his contemporaries confirmed by the judgment of posterity, is embodied in that inscription on the monument of Lord Chatham in the Guildhall of London, which records that under his administration commerce had been united with, and made to flourish by, war. When he assumed office, England was only an European Power, and almost bankrupt in honour and influence. In 1762, she was not only a great European Power, but an Asiatic and an American Power, whose line of military posts was rapidly stretching, like a girdle, round the whole globe.

Macaulay is right in considering the position occupied at the close of George the 2nd's reign by the man who had achieved these results, as the most enviable ever occupied by any man in English history. He had conciliated the King; he ruled supreme in the House of Commons; the people adored him; all Europe looked up to him with admiration. He had made England the greatest country in the world; and he himself was the greatest Englishman of his time. The nation was filled with pride and delight. The Parliament was undisturbed by the struggles of factions. It seemed as if party spirit were entirely dead; and even in the religious world tranquillity prevailed. The Church was indulgent,

if apathetic; the Dissenters were tolerated; and persecution no longer vexed the Roman Catholics. The "golden year" of our Victorian poet was anticipated. And all had been accomplished by the genius of one man.

But at the very moment when the future of Pitt's power appeared to be thoroughly consolidated, it was tottering to its fall. The accession of George the 3rd (in October, 1760) completely changed the aspect of affairs. He came to the throne calling himself "a Whig of the Revolution," and resolved to be every inch a King; a patriot king such as Bolingbroke had sketched, holding in his own hands the issues of peace and war, and rising high above the dictation of parties and ministers. He knew little or nothing of the principles of parliamentary government, and could conceive of no other policy than an amiable despotism. Of Pitt he was madly jealous; and he did not disguise his desire that "decrepitude or death" might quickly put an end to a career which threw the throne into shadow and obscurity. He was assisted by circumstances in carrying out his designs against the Constitution. The Tory party was ready to rally round a young king, who had been born in England, and boasted of being an Englishman. He quickly increased the number of his adherents by a judicious employment of the patronage which was still at the Crown's disposal. It had been practically usurped by the Ministers of his predecessors; but by George the 3rd it was resumed and jealously held. Thus, with the weapon of which Walpole had made such dexterous use, "he broke up (as Mr. Green puts it) the party Walpole had so firmly bound together." He perceived that the

Whigs were divided among themselves by the factious spirit originating in a long enjoyment of power. He perceived, too, that they were weakened by the anger and contempt with which the country was beginning to regard the selfishness and corruption of its representatives. Upwards of thirty years before, Gay had ridiculed the leading statesmen of the time in the 'Beggars' Opera,' and in 'Polly,' under the guise of highwaymen and pickpockets. "It is difficult to determine," he said, "whether the fine gentlemen imitate the gentlemen of the road, or the gentlemen of the road the fine gentlemen." The "fine gentlemen" were now represented by Newcastle and his myrmidons, and the public scorn was deeper and greater than ever.

We think, with Mr. Green, that the King would not have prevailed against Pitt and Newcastle, the one representing public opinion, and the other parliamentary management, had the two maintained a firm alliance. But the Whig families were already falling away from the Great Minister, dissatisfied with his rejection of the French proposals of peace because they involved a betrayal of Prussia. In 1761, he obtained information of the conclusion of a new Bourbon family compact between France and Spain; and, with the usual audacity of his genius, he proposed to declare war against Spain, to seize the treasure fleet from the Indies, and to attack at once both Havanna and the Philippines. Had his scheme been executed, Spain would have been brought to her knees, and probably the destiny of Spanish America would have been completely changed. But it was too vast for the conception of his colleagues, his

brother-in-law, Earl Temple, excepted; and it was distasteful to the King and "the power behind the King." Newcastle, supported by the Court, and encouraged by the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Hardwicke, George Grenville, and other members of the Whig party, rejected Pitt's proposal; and Pitt and Earl Temple immediately resigned (October 5, 1761).

The great statesman's fall was hailed on the Continent with a burst of exultation. "Pitt disgraced!" exclaimed a French philosopher; "it is worth two victories to us." By the English people it was witnessed with profound regret.* When he joined the civic procession on the

* In the 'New Foundling Hospital for Wit' is preserved the following effusion, entitled "Corinna Vindicated:"—

"Corinna, Virtue's child, and chaste
As vestal maid of yore,
Nor sought the impartial rites in haste,
Nor yet those rites forswore.

"Her, many a worthless knight to wed
Pursued in various shapes;
But she, though choosing not to lead,
Would not be led by—*apes*.

"Roysters they were, and each a mere
Penelope's gallant;
They ate and drank up all her cheer,
And loved her into want.

"See her by Walpole first address'd,
(But Walpole caught a Tartar);
Him while an ill-earn'd riband graced,
She wore a nobler garter.

"A pair of authors next advance,
Alike for heresies fit,
The filly 'gan to kick and prance,
And spurn the Pelham bit.

ensuing Lord Mayor's day, the crowds saluted him with the warmest tokens of attachment and admiration. As he passed along, the gentlemen in the balconies waved their hats, and the ladies fluttered their handkerchiefs; the mob clung about his carriage, and filled the air with incessant peals of applause.*

Pitt, on delivering up his seals of office, was received by the young King in the most gracious manner. He was urged both by George and his favourite, the Earl of Bute, to accept some mark of royal gratitude; such as the governorship of Canada, with a salary of £5000 a year. Residence would not be required; and as the

"But who comes next! Ah! well I ken
Him playing fast and loose,
Cease, Fox, the prey will ne'er be thine,
Corinna's not a goose.

"See last the man by heaven design'd
To make Corinna blest;
To every virtuous act inclin'd,
All *patent* in his breast.

"He woo'd the fair with manly sense,
And, flattery apart,
By dint of sterling eloquence
Subdued Corinna's heart.

"She gave her hand—but, lest her hand
So given should prove a curse,
The *priest* omitted, by command,
For better and for worse."

* Shouts of "Pitt for ever!" were mingled with cries of "No Bute!" "No Newcastle salmon!" On the same occasion, Lord Bute was hooted and pelted as he passed through Cheapside.

"What honest man but would with joy submit
To bleed with Cato, and retire with Pitt?"—*Churchill.*

governor of Canada, in the then state of the law, could not be a member of the House of Commons, a bill should be introduced authorising Pitt to hold the government conjointly with a seat in Parliament, and in the preamble enunciating his claims to the national gratitude. With wise discretion the great statesman refused a reward, that from its exceptional and unconstitutional character, would have proved an embarrassment; but he ultimately accepted for his wife a peeress's coronet, and for himself a pension of £3000 a year for three lives. Pitt's services had been so signal, his disinterestedness was so well known, and it was so generally understood that his pecuniary resources were straitened, that his acceptance of these honours, whatever might have been the expectation of the Court, did not diminish his popularity.* The

* On the occasion of Pitt's retirement, a contemporary versifier gave utterance to his feelings in the following effusion :—

Britannia long her hapless fate had mourn'd ;
 By factions rent at home, by Europe scorn'd,
 Successless wars her languid councils show ;
 Her troops still fly before the insulting foe.
 No more her fleets triumphant rule the main,
 And sickening Commerce sues for aid in vain.
 To guide her tott'ring bark a pilot fit
 At length she seeks—and casts her eyes on Pitt.
 He left his rural seat, and active rose ;
 Retriev'd her credit and subdu'd her foes.
 From pole to pole, on ev'ry hostile shore
 Again her flag's display'd, her cannons roar.
 The Lakes of Canada our triumphs hear,
 And Afric's sons the name of Pitt reverse.
 Nay more, he bids even *civil* Discord cease,
 And sees each boist'rous Faction hushed in peace ;
 Then quits the helm, without a title great ;
 And seeks once more at Hayes a calm retreat.

corporation of London authorised their Town Clerk to address to him a letter, which is without a parallel, we suspect, in the archives of our great cities :—

“DEAR SIR,

“The City of London, as long as they have any memory, cannot forget that you accepted the seals when this nation was in the most deplorable circumstances to which any country can be reduced; that our armies were beaten, our navy inactive, our trade exposed to the enemy, our credit, as if we expected to become bankrupts, sunk to the lowest pitch; that there was nothing to be found but despondency at home, and contempt abroad. The City must also for ever remember, that when you resigned the seals, our armies and navies were victorious, our trade secure, and flourishing more than in a peace, our public credit, and people readier to lend than ministers to borrow: that there was nothing but exultation at home, confusion and despair among our enemies, amazement and veneration among all neutral nations; that the French were reduced so low as to sue for a peace which we, from humanity, were willing to grant, though their haughtiness was too great, and our successes [were] too many, for any terms to be agreed on. Remember this, the City cannot but lament

Great Cincinnatus thus, at Rome's request,
Left his lone farm, and took th' imperial vest,
With heav'n-born zeal his patriot breast inspir'd,
Thus sav'd his country, triumph'd, and retir'd.

Graves, 'Euphrosyne' (ed. 1776), pp. 116, 117.

[Graves is best known as the author of 'The Spiritual Quixote.']

that you have quitted the helm. But if Knaves have taught fools to call your resignation (when you can no longer procure the same success, being prevented from pursuing the same measures) a desertion of the public, and to look upon you, for accepting a reward, which can scarce bear that name, in the light of a pensioner, the City of London hope they shall not be ranked by you among the one or the other. They are truly sensible, that, though you cease to guide the helm, you have not deserted the vessel; and that, pensioner as you are, your inclination to promote the public good is still only to be equalled by your ability; that you sincerely wish success to the new pilot, and will be ready, not only to warn him and the crew of rocks and quicksands, but to assist in bringing the ship through the storm into a safe harbour."

A more extraordinary testimonial to a statesman's services was surely never put on record!

His political sagacity was abundantly confirmed by the course of events. War with Spain he had predicted; and war with Spain took place. News arrived that an expedition which he had organised and sent forth had captured Martinique; and soon afterwards Havannah and Manilla fell into British hands. But the great treasure fleet which he had proposed to intercept unloaded its ingots of gold and silver in the harbour of Cadiz, before Lord Bute, who was supreme in the councils of the King, would believe that Spain meditated an open rupture.

John Stuart, third Earl of Bute, was born in 1713. Educated at Eton, he entered upon a public career in 1737, when he was elected one of the representative peers of Scotland. His good fortune secured for him the order of the Thistle. Afterwards, as one of the lords of the bedchamber to the Prince of Wales, he obtained an extraordinary influence over the mind of the Princess Dowager. Scandal represented him as her favoured lover; he was undoubtedly her most trusted friend. Though he could dance and act, could devise masquerade costumes, and deliver dilettante discourses on questions of art, archæology, and poetry, his knowledge was superficial, while of practical politics he had had no experience. Prince Frederick had once said to him, "Bute, you are the very man to be envoy at some proud German Court where there is nothing to do;" and the Prince's shrewd estimate was completely accurate. He was a man of small aims, with a passion for small things. While he played the oracle at Leicester House he could do but little harm. The case was altered when he became the chief adviser at St. James's. The political errors he committed were of the grossest character; and by the coldness and haughtiness of his manner he disgusted men of the highest understanding, and offended not a few of his own supporters.

The session of 1762, however, passed over without disturbance, Pitt, with chivalrous greatness, refraining from throwing any difficulties in the way of the Bute government. His speeches on all occasions were marked by their moderation of tone, their freedom from arrogance. The incessant attacks of the courtiers, and the

calumnies of the Grub Street writers whom Bute had hired, could not provoke him out of his equanimity. He laid just claim to the event of having predicted the Spanish War, but added that the season was not fit for altercation and recrimination. "A day," he said, "had arrived when every Englishman should stand forth for his country. Arm every man; be one people; forget all things but the public. I set you the example. Harassed by slanderers, sinking under pain and disease, for the public I forget both my wrongs and infirmities." It must have been some consolation, however, even to his generous mind when the arch-plotter, Newcastle, fell through Bute's employment of the very arts by which the Duke had procured the fall of others. He was loaded with insults and obloquy, and compelled, after forty-five years of office, to retire to the obscurity of Esher. Bute then became First Lord of the Treasury, Grenville and Lord Egremont, Secretaries of State, and Sir Francis Dashwood, an ex-Jacobite, of infamous character, Chancellor of the Exchequer. The new Ministry addressed themselves to the task of making peace. As a first step, they threw over Prussia. Next they entered into negotiations with Spain and France. To the latter victorious England restored Martinique; to the former Cuba and the Philippines, receiving Florida in exchange. The peace, taken as a whole, was honourable and advantageous; but "less honourable and less advantageous than might have been expected from a long and almost unbroken series of victories by land and sea, in every part of the world."

It filled to the brim Bute's cup of unpopularity. The people poured out upon him their fullest hatred and

fiercest scorn. He was a Scotchman, and England had not yet learned to love the Scotch.* He was a Scotchman, and filled all the public offices, and the army and the navy, with Scotchmen. A versifier in one of the public journals produced the following doggrel :—

* We subjoin Lord Shelburne's "idea of the character" of Lord Bute:—"His culture was that of any Scotch nobleman, proud, aristocratical, pompous, imposing, with a great deal of superficial knowledge such as is commonly to be met with in France and Scotland, chiefly upon matters of natural philosophy, mines, fossils, a smattering of mechanicks, a little metaphysicks, and a very false taste in everything. Added to this, he had a gloomy sort of madness which had made him affect living alone, particularly in Scotland, where he resided in the Isle of Bute, with as much pomp and as much uncomfortableness in his little domestick circle, as if he had been King of the Island, Lady Bute a forlorn queen, and his children slaves of a despotick tyrant. He read a great deal, but it was chiefly out-of-the-way books of science and pompous poetry. Lucan was his favourite poet among the ancients, and Queen Elizabeth's Earl of Essex his favourite author and *object of imitation*. He admired his letters, and had them almost by heart. He excelled most in writing, of which he appeared to have a great habit. He was insolent and cowardly, at least the greatest political coward I ever knew. He was rash and timid, accustomed to seek advice of different persons, but had not sense and sagacity to distinguish and digest, with a perpetual apprehension of being governed, which made him, when he followed any advice, always add something of his own in point of matter or manner, which sometimes took away the little good which was in it, or changed the whole nature of it. He was always upon stilts, never natural, except now and then upon the subject of women. He felt all the pleasure of power to consist either in punishing or astonishing. He was ready to abandon his nearest friend if attacked, or to throw any blame off his own shoulders. He could be pleasant in company when he liked, and did not want for some good points, so much as for resolution and knowledge of the world to bring them into action. He excelled as far as I could observe in managing the interior of a Court, and had an abundant share of art and hypocrisy."—"Life of William, Earl of Shelburne," by Lord E. Fitzmaurice, i. 139-141.

“NEWCASTLE COAL.

PITT COAL.

SCOTCH COAL.

“Quoth *Jack* to his friend, as his fingers he blew,
 ’Tis prodigiously cold ; prithe, what must we do ?
 Our fire’s all extinguished, nor have we a bit
 Of that fuel we us’d from *Newcastle* or *Pitt*.

“Oot, oot, mon, quoth *Sawney*, we’ve fuel in planty,
 Raal *Scotch*, by my saul, and it weel may contant ye.
 And, honey, quoth *Teague*, when the summer begins,
 We’ll have *Florida turf*, that shall burn all your shins.”

All the old jests which had been popular since the days of Ben Jonson, jests about stockingless lasses and treeless hills, the national diet of the people and the barrenness of their country, not yet consecrated by the genius of Walter Scott,—were directed against Bute and his crew of place-hunters. And it must be owned that for the prejudices which this paper-war revealed there was some excuse, when Ramsay was made court-painter in preference to Sir Joshua Reynolds ; * when Gray was refused a Professorship, and Home, † the author of a dull tragedy, rewarded with a sinecure and a pension. The current of popular feeling was indicated, among other signs, by the applause bestowed on Churchill’s violent satire, ‘The Prophecy of Famine,’ which appeared in January, 1763. Scotland is there represented as the chosen home of Famine, who addresses her children

* Allan Ramsay, the son of the poet of ‘The Gentle Shepherd,’ confined himself almost entirely to portrait painting. He died in 1784.

† John Home, born 1722 ; died 1808. His tragedy of ‘Douglas’ is now very little read. Bute pensioned him with £300 a year.

in anticipation of the good that will accrue to them when they descend upon the rich Southern plains:—

"Pent in this barren corner of the isle,
Where partial fortune never deigned to smile;
Like nature's bastards, reaping for our share
What was rejected by the lawful heir;
Unknown amongst the nations of the earth,
Or only known to raise contempt and mirth . . .
Long have we borne this mighty weight of ill,
These vile injurious taunts, and bear them still;
But times of happier note are now at hand,
And the full promise of a better land."

Having taken possession of this happy region, where milk with honey flows and plenty reigns, they will ravage it "at large," without asking leave of the owners:—

"For our advantage shall their harvests grow,
And Scotsmen reap what they disdain'd to sow:
For us, the sun shall climb the eastern hill;
For us, the rain shall fall, the dew distil; . . .
For us, sublimer heights shall science reach;
For us, their statesmen plot, their churchmen preach:
Their noblest limbs of council we'll disjoint,
And, mocking, new ones of our own appoint."

The Goddess proceeds to inform her admiring children that the time of the fulfilment of her prophecy is close at hand:—

"Already is this game of fate begun,
Under the sanction of my darling son;
That son, of nature royal as his name,*
Is destined to redeem our race from shame:
His boundless power, beyond example great,
Shall make the rough way smooth, the crooked straight;
Shall for our ease the raging floods restrain,
And sink the mountain level to the plain."

* The reader will remember that Lord Bute was a Stuart.

"Discord, whom in a cavern under ground,
With massy fetters their late patriot * bound;
Where her own flesh the furious hag might tear,
And vent her curses to the vacant air;
Where, that she never might be heard of more,
He planted Loyalty to guard the door,
For better purpose shall our chief release,
Disguise her for a time, and call her peace."

In the satirist's poem, 'The Ghost,' founded upon the once famous Cock Lane "sensation," occurs another truculent attack on the unpopular Minister, whom Churchill was at the same time assailing, in conjunction with Wilkes, in the notorious *North Briton* :—

"Big with vast hopes, some mighty plan,
Which wrought the busy soul of man
To her full bent, the Civil Law
(Fit was to keep a world in awe),
Bound o'er his brows, fair to behold,
As Jewish frontlets were of old;
The famous Charter of our land,
Defaced, and mangled in his hand;
As one whom deepest thoughts employ,
But deepest thoughts of truest joy,
Serious and slow he strode, he stalk'd;
Before him troops of heroes walk'd,
Whom best he lov'd, of heroes crown'd,
By Tories guarded all around;
Dull, solemn pleasure in his face,
He saw the honours of his race,
He saw their lineal glories rise,
And touch'd, or seem'd to touch the skies;
Not the most distant mark of fear,
No sign of axe or scaffold near,
Not one crush'd thought, to cross his will,
Of such a place as Tower Hill."

* The allusion is to Pitt.

Such was the violence of the mob, inflamed as they were by the caricatures and libels that issued daily from the press, that Bute, on one occasion, was attacked in his chair, and rescued only by the interference of a troop of the guards. He was forced to assume a disguise if he went abroad; and he was once recognised "in the piazza of Covent Garden, muffled in a large coat, and with a hat and wig drawn over his brows." A jack boot, in grim allusion to his name, and a petticoat, in coarse reference to the Dowager Princess, were burned in bonfires at the corner of the streets, or suspended from extemporised gibbets. At length the favourite quailed before the pitiless storm that howled and raged around him. Parliament was on the point of assembling; the Treaty would be discussed by Pitt and his adherents; if the majority should be against it, what might not befall the Minister who had negotiated it? Bute saw that he could not afford to run any risk, and that by some means or other a majority must be secured. For this purpose he turned to Harry Fox, who was inhaling the ocean breezes in his sequestered seat at Kingsgate, in the Isle of Thanet. The choice might seem surprising, for Fox had always been a Whig of the Whigs,—'the Prince of Whigs,' he was popularly called,—was the trusted friend of the 'hero of Culloden,'—and was personally obnoxious to the Princess Dowager. But, on the other hand, he was fond of power and place, and unscrupulous as to the means by which they were obtained. He had his private grievances to redress, and more particularly did he yearn to revenge himself for the long ascendancy of Pitt. In an evil

hour for his repute and happiness he listened to the tempter, and for the bribe of a peerage, undertook to secure a majority in the House of Commons. In making this unholy bargain, he expected to have on his side the Dukes of Cumberland and Devonshire, his personal friends and two zealous Whigs ; but he soon found that they resented his apostacy, and that he must be prepared to encounter their opposition.

It was too late to draw back, and he set to work with all the eagerness of a mind stimulated by jealousy and disappointment. His system of corruption was without disguise. Votes were openly bought and sold ; and as large a sum as £25,000 was expended upon this infamous merchandise in a single morning. Equally unblushing was his system of intimidation. The lowest officers of Government were thrown adrift on the world, if it appeared that they had owed their places to the intervention of some obnoxious patron. " One poor man to whom a pension had been given for his gallantry in a fight with smugglers, was deprived of it because he had been befriended by the Duke of Grafton. An aged widow, who, on account of her husband's services in the navy, had, many years before, been made housekeeper to a public officer, was dismissed from her situation, because it was imagined that she was distantly connected by marriage with the Cavendish family. The public clamour, as may well be supposed, grew daily louder and louder. But the louder it grew, the more resolutely did Fox go on with the work which he had begun. His old friends could not conceive what had possessed him. ' I could forgive,' said the Duke

of Cumberland, 'Fox's political vagaries; but I am quite confounded by his inhumanity. Surely he used to be the best-natured of men.'"

By means such as these, a majority was made sure of, and Bute met Parliament in a complacent state of mind. The motion approving of the Treaty, though Pitt rose from a sick-bed, and with his limbs bound in flannel, went down to the House and spoke for nearly three hours against it, was carried by 319 against 65.* The Ministry were triumphant. But their evil genius led them to propose, as part of their budget, a tax upon perry and cider, articles which were then regarded, in some districts of England, as necessities of life; and such a whirlwind of indignation arose as terrified even Fox. In the debate which took place in the Commons, George Grenville came to the rescue of the embarrassed Chancellor of the Exchequer. At that time a song by Dr. Howard, beginning 'Gentle Shepherd, tell me where,' was on everybody's lips. Grenville, replying to Pitt, contended that the proposed tax was unavoidable, because the Government did not know on what other articles they could lay a tax of equal productiveness. "Let the honourable gentleman," said Grenville, in querulous tones, "tell me where you can lay another tax; let him, I say, tell me where." Pitt slowly sauntered out of the House, murmuring in a whine like Grenville's, 'Gentle Shepherd, tell me where!' The readi-

* "Now," said the Princess Dowager, "my son is really King of England."—*Walpole, Memoirs*, i. 233.

the application convulsed the House; and Grenville long retained the designation of "the gentle shepherd."

The unpopularity of the Ministry had risen to such a height that Bute, confounded and alarmed, bent his head before the storm. His ambition was gratified,* and he could hope for nothing more as a compensation for the anxiety in which he was involved. On the 8th of April he suddenly resigned. Fox fled at once for shelter to the House of Peers, with the title of Lord Holland; and George Grenville was called to the head of the Government as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. If Bute had supposed that he would govern through Grenville, he was soon undeceived. The latter quickly asserted his independence, and showed as little disposition to yield to the King as to the favourite. A man of great courage and inflexible temper, with a profound belief in the omnipotence of Parliament, he entered at once on a career of aggression. His Government may well be described by a phrase borrowed from contemporary French politics; it was a "Ministry of combat." Unfortunately, it was also a Ministry of national disgrace.

It is essential to remember that Grenville's first Lord of the Admiralty was the Earl of Sandwich, whose irregularity of life was a common scandal. Chesterfield has spoken of him in terms of the keenest yet well-deserved severity. "The act of robbing vice of its disgust, and throwing around it the mantle of convivial

* He had procured the Garter for himself, and for his son a British peerage.

pleasure, belongs in a very peculiar manner to this nobleman. I understand that, from his youth to the present time, he has proceeded in one uniform, unblushing course of debauchery and dissipation. His conversation is chiefly tinged with unchaste expressions and indecent allusions; and some have assured me that if these were to be omitted by him, much of his wit, or, at least, what is called his wit, would be lost." Churchill has transmitted his name to posterity in lines that burn:—

" From his youth upwards to the present day,
 When vices, more than years, have marked him grey :
 When riotous excess, with wasteful hand,
 Shakes life's frail glass and hastes each ebbing sand,
 Unmindful from what stock he drew his birth,*
 Untainted with one deed of real worth.
 Lothario,† holding honour at no price,
 Folly to folly added, vice to vice ;
 Wrought sin with greediness, and sought for shame
 With greater zeal than good men seek for fame."‡

It was this man§ who, on the first day of the session of Parliament, laid on the table of the House of Lords a copy of a licentious poem, the 'Essay on Woman,' which Wilkes, the conductor of the 'North Briton,' and

* The first Earl of Sandwich distinguished himself at Marston Moor and Naseby, and afterwards became one of our most successful sea captains. He won a great victory over the Dutch admiral, Opdam, on the 3rd of June, 1665, and perished in the desperate battle of the 28th of May, 1672.

† He was called Lothario from the hero of Rowe's 'Fair Penitent.'

‡ Churchill, 'The Candidate.'

§ On the death of the Earl of Egremont he had been made Secretary of State.

M.P. for Aylesbury, had printed for private circulation. The copy had been surreptitiously obtained from the printer. Sandwich's speech opened thus:—"I have a paper in my hand, whose contents are of such a horrible and detestable nature that I almost wonder it did not draw down the immediate vengeance of heaven upon this nation,"—and it proceeded in a tone of virtuous exaltation strangely opposite to the life and the known principles of the speaker. The book was condemned, rightly enough; but Sandwich's hypocrisy provoked universal disgust. It was soon known that, scarcely a fortnight before this dramatic exhibition, he had been fraternising with Wilkes in a low London *bagnio*. It happened that at this time Gay's 'Beggars' Opera' was reproduced at Covent Garden Theatre; and when the Macheath of the night came to the words, "That Jemmy Twitcher should peach me I own surprised me," the audience applied them to Sandwich with a roar of laughter. Thenceforth the Earl was everywhere known as "Jemmy Twitcher."

Meantime, Wilkes* had incurred the anger of the Grenville Government by his attacks in the 'North Briton,' and the 45th number of that periodical, published on the 23rd of April, was selected for prosecution. Wilkes was arrested on a "general warrant," from Lord Halifax, the Secretary of State,—that is, a warrant not naming the person to be arrested,—and flung into the Tower. His papers were seized and conveyed to the Secretary of

* Wilkes was a mean profligate and a worthless demagogue. His character is cleverly sketched in Charles Johnson's remarkable novel of 'Chrysalis; or, the Adventures of a Guinea,' (published in 1760).

State. Proceedings so arbitrary excited a tumult of indignation, and the member for Aylesbury became a popular hero. A writ of *habeas corpus* released him from prison; and Chief Justice Pratt (afterwards Lord Camden) declared the warrant illegal. The King, distressed by the confusion which raged around him, then made an attempt to obtain Pitt's assistance; but as Pitt insisted on the recall to office of the chiefs of the Whig party, no agreement was concluded. The Grenville Government went on its imperious way, and carried in the House of Commons (November 15th), by 273 votes against 111, a resolution to the effect that the 45th number of the 'North Briton' was a false, scandalous, and malicious libel. In this condemnation Pitt concurred, while in other respects strongly opposed to Grenville's proceedings. Wilkes then threw himself upon his privilege as a member of Parliament. The House immediately declared that this privilege did not extend to the case of writing and publishing seditious libels; though Pitt pointed out that such a surrender of its privileges was highly dangerous to the freedom of Parliament, and an infringement on the rights of the people. On the 20th of January, Wilkes, who meanwhile had been wounded in a duel, and had retired to France, was expelled from the House of Commons, and a new writ issued for Aylesbury. This arbitrary assumption of judicial power, added to Grenville's terrorist procedure in issuing two hundred injunctions against different journals, did not tend to allay the fury of indignation that swept through the country. Everywhere resounded the cry of "Wilkes and

Liberty ;" and the political " situation " daily increased in gravity.

It was about this time that Pitt received a singular legacy. Horace Walpole records the circumstance with his usual vivacity of phrase:—" You have heard," he writes to the Earl of Hertford, " to be sure, of the great fortune that is bequeathed to Mr. Pitt by a Sir William Pynsent, an old man of near ninety who quitted the world on the peace of Utrecht; and, luckily for Mr. Pitt, lived to be as angry with its *pendant*, the Treaty of Paris. I did not send you the first report, which mounted it to an enormous sum: I think the medium account is £2000 a year, and £30,000 in money. This Sir W. Pynsent, whose fame, like an aloe, did not blow till near a hundred, was a singularity." He appears to have been influenced in his dedication of his fortune by a conviction that he could trace a resemblance between the incidents of his early manhood and those which he lived to witness in the dreary winter of his old age; between the disgrace of Marlborough and the disgrace of Pitt; the rise of Harley and that of Lord Bute; the Utrecht Treaty concluded by Bolingbroke and the Treaty of Paris negotiated by the Duke of Bedford. The conviction was not altogether erroneous, for History loves to repeat itself.

But while Pitt's fortune improved, his health deteriorated. Tortured by gout, he withdrew to his seat at Hayes, in Kent, where for some months he resided in profound seclusion. Except from his bed to his arm-chair, and from his arm-chair to his bed, he scarcely moved. Unable to write, he employed his wife to

conduct his most private correspondence. Thus hidden among the groves of Hayes, he was of the world but not in it; he might be compared to a pilot who, in his retreat on shore, rests undisturbed, while, without, the winds are blowing and the waters raging, and the "tall ship" is driven onward to destruction. When the storm increases, the crew and passengers look anxiously towards the tower where sits in solitude the man who could steer them into a secure haven. It was so with Pitt. The country, distracted by internal commotions and foreign dangers, cast many a wistful glance towards the retired statesman, in whose genius and devotion seemed involved the safety of the commonwealth.

For the "Ministry of combat," not content with its attack upon the press and its infringement of the rights of the subject, nor warned by its signal discomfiture in these measures, had plunged the mother-country into a quarrel with her American colonies. The public debt in 1765 amounted to £140,000,000, and the interest on this sum made a heavy annual charge. Grenville, arguing that part of it had been incurred in the defence of America, proposed that America should bear its share of the burden; and with this view raised the import duties at all colonial ports. That the mother-country was entitled to deal as she chose with external commerce, was a principle generally admitted, and one for which Pitt always contended. The colonies, therefore, submitted, though not without a sentiment of irritation. Nor did they oppose when the laws restricting colonial trade to British ports was rigidly enforced; for such enforcement, though oppressive, was legal. But the

Minister crossed the bounds not only of legality but of equity, when he attempted to regulate the internal taxation of the colonies, by the introduction of stamp duties. Macaulay well observes that a statesman of large views would have felt that to lay taxes at Westminster on New England and New York, was in contradiction, if not of the letter of the Statute Book, of the principles of good government and the spirit of the unwritten constitution. He would also have felt that any sum realized by American stamps would have been dearly purchased by the alienation of the Colonies. But no such considerations presented themselves to the pettifogging mind of Grenville. He could understand no national interests which were not summed up in pounds, shillings, and pence.

It is unnecessary for us to dwell on the outburst of indignation with which the Stamp Act was received in America, or on the measures of resistance adopted by the colonists. Before information of these measures reached England, the Grenville administration was out of office.

In the spring of 1765 the King fell ill. It was the first attack of that mental malady which eventually clouded his life and reign with a permanent gloom. As the heir apparent was only two years old, it became desirable to provide for the administration of the government in case of a minority. The King wished to have the power of naming a regent by will. The Ministers, fearing or professing to fear that he would name the Earl of Bute, drew up the bill so as to limit the King's choice to members of the royal family, and

even insisted on a further limitation, so as to exclude the Princess Dowager. In this ungracious restriction, however, they failed to gain the support of the House of Commons. Resenting the insult offered to his mother, the King unbosomed himself to the Duke of Cumberland, his uncle, a man of probity, clear judgment, and undaunted courage, with whom English historians have not dealt either justly or generously. The Duke undertook to deliver his royal nephew from the bondage in which Grenville held him; and hurrying to Hayes, had a long interview with the illustrious invalid. But Pitt was at that time under the influence of his brother-in-law, Earl Temple, and the Earl objected to Lord Northumberland as First Lord of the Treasury. He said that he never would come into office under Lord Bute's lieutenant.* The negotiation failed; and Cumberland advised the King to fall back on his then ministers. These, however, had offered him so intolerable an affront, forcing their way into his presence, and reading him a written remonstrance of many pages, couched in the most violent language, that he would endure them no longer. Finally, at the Duke's request, the Marquis of Rockingham, an upright nobleman of the highest character and of no mean parts, but wanting in the confidence and resource essential to a party-leader, consented to form an administration. It included General Conway,—an excellent soldier, the friend of Horace Walpole,—and the Duke of Grafton, who was afterwards assailed by the virulent rhetoric of "Junius." Lord

* Almon, '*Anecdotes of Chatham*,' i. 418. Lord Northumberland, who was connected with Bute by marriage, was then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Rockingham chose as his private secretary the son of a Dublin attorney, whose genius had already obtained a wide recognition, though as yet it had advanced him to no office of political importance. This was Edmund Burke, who in January, 1766, entered Parliament as member for Wendover. The new Government had scarcely been formed before it was deprived by death of the support of the Duke of Cumberland (October 31st, 1765). It was so deficient in administrative experience, however, that no one anticipated for it a long existence. Charles Townshend said it was mere lutestring; pretty summer wear, but would never do for the winter. Chesterfield described it as a political arch, which would certainly require repairs and a keystone "next winter"; that Keystone, he said, must necessarily be Mr. Pitt.

Grenville had left to his successor a legacy of evil omen in the quarrel with America, which every day seemed to intensify in bitterness. What was to be done? Enforce the Stamp Act at the point of the sword, as Grenville and the King alike desired? Or set it aside as a document null and void, on the ground that the British Parliament could not tax the colonies? The latter was the course proposed by Pitt; and at the present time would be generally approved of. Or, as Rockingham and his colleagues put it, the Stamp Act might be regarded as indefensible, because it was unjust and impolitic, and even from a financial point of view a mistake. Macaulay lays great stress on this last course as superior to Pitt's, but we fail to see that there is any special difference between the two.

When Parliament met in January, Pitt, restored to

health, resumed his attendance in the House, and took a constant and a prominent part in the debates which the condition of affairs in America necessitated.* He opposed the Ministry when they asked the House to declare that the legislative authority of the British Parliament over the colonies was sovereign and supreme; but supported them in their proposition to repeal the Stamp Act. He insisted with much earnestness on the guilt and danger of war with the colonies. "In such a cause," he said, "your success would be hazardous. America, if she fell, would fall like the strong man. She would embrace the

* His speech on the Address (January 14th) contained some characteristic touches. As when, turning towards the new Ministers, he said:—"I love to be explicit—I cannot give them my confidence. Pardon me, gentlemen, confidence is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom. Youth is the season of credulity; by comparing events with each other, reasoning from effects to causes, methinks I plainly discover the traces of an over-ruling influence." Again:—"I have no local attachments; it is indifferent to me whether a man was rocked in his cradle on this side or that side of the Tweed. I sought for merit wherever it was to be found. It is my boast that I was the first Minister who looked for it, and I found it in the mountains of the North. I called it forth, and drew it into your service, an hardy and intrepid race of men! men, who when left by your jealousy, became a prey to the artifices of your enemies, and had gone nigh to have overturned the State in the war before the last. These men, in the last war, were brought to combat on your side; they served with fidelity, as they fought with valour, and conquered for you in every part of the world: detested be the national reflections against them!—they are unjust, groundless, ill-bred, unmanly." And again:—"I rejoice that America has resisted. Three millions of people so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to submit to be slaves, would have been fit instruments to make slaves of the rest. I come not here armed at all points, with law cases and acts of Parliament, with the statute-book doubled down in dog's-ears, to defend the cause of liberty,—but for the defence of liberty upon a general principle, upon a constitutional principle, it is a ground on which I stand firm, on which I dare meet any man "

pillars of the State, and pull down the constitution along with her. Is this your boasted peace? Not to sheathe the sword in its scabbard, but to sheathe it in the bowels of your countrymen? Will you quarrel with yourselves now the whole house of Bourbon is united against you? While France disturbs your fisheries in Newfoundland, embarrasses your slave-trade to Africa, and withholds from your subjects in Canada their property stipulated by treaty; while the ransom for the Manillas is denied by Spain, and its gallant conqueror* basely traduced into a mean plunderer, a gentleman whose noble and generous spirit would do honour to the proudest grandee of the country. The Americans have not acted in all things with prudence and temper. The Americans have been wronged. They have been driven to madness by injustice. Will you punish them for the madness you have occasioned? Rather let prudence and temper come first from this side. I will undertake for America, that she will follow the example. There are two lines in a ballad of Prior's, of a man's behaviour to his wife, so applicable to you and your colonies that I cannot help repeating them :—

“ Be to her faults a little blind ;
Be to her virtues very kind.” †

“ Upon the whole, I will beg leave to tell the House what is really my opinion. It is, that the Stamp Act be *repealed absolutely, totally, and immediately*. That the reason for the repeal be resigned, because it was founded

* Colonel (afterwards Sir William) Draper (1721–1787), the object of so many of the letters of “ Junius,”

† Matthew Prior.

on an erroneous principle. At the same time let the sovereign authority of this country over the colonies be asserted in as strong terms as can be devised, and be made to extend to every point of legislation whatsoever.

“That we may bind their *trade*, confine their *manufactures*, and exercise any *power* whatsoever, except that of taking their money out of their pockets without their consent.”

Eventually the repeal of the Stamp Act was carried by a considerable majority, passed through both Houses, and along with the Declaratory Bill for asserting the authority of the British Parliament supreme, received the royal assent on the 18th of March, 1776.*

* For a calm and lucid examination of the questions arising in connection with the Grenville Government's “disastrous experiment of colonial taxation,” the reader is referred to Sir Thomas Erskine May's ‘Constitutional History,’ ii. 550-562. See also Professor Smyth's ‘Lectures on Modern History,’ ii. 849-469 (Lectures xxx.-xxxvi.).

IV.

LORD ROCKINGHAM'S Government carried no other important measure. The inherent weakness which experienced politicians had detected on its formation soon brought about its downfall. It was never heartily supported by the King, and those members who were known as "the King's friends," frequently voted against it. Then, again, by passing a resolution condemnatory of general warrants, and another censuring the seizure of papers in case of libel, it widened the breach between it and the Grenville faction. Further, it refused to dabble in corruption. But the principal cause of its weakness was the defection of Pitt; and this defection would be a heavy blot on his fame, if we could not excuse it on the ground of his imaginative loyalty, which the King had ingeniously stimulated and fostered, and the effect of his terrible illness on his naturally clear judgment.* The Whig Ministers eagerly desired the alliance and support of Pitt. He was free to make his own terms. Their principles were his principles, and the measures they had carried were the measures he approved; but he was unable to resist the royal blandishments. He was no

* It must also be allowed that he had good grounds of complaint against the Old (or Rockingham) Whigs. As for the Repeal of the Stamp Act, it did not spring from their own initiation; they were "bullied into it" by Pitt.—See Lord E. Fitzmaurice's defence of Pitt's conduct in his 'Life of the Earl of Shelburne,' i. 406, 407.

longer proof against the caresses, the praises, the delicate flatteries which were lavished upon him. Pitt, like most of the statesmen of his time, felt a *personal* loyalty, an attachment to the person of the sovereign, which in these days is no longer in vogue. But the chief cause of his unfortunate action was, we suspect, his morbid mental condition. There can be no question that at this time he was a victim to an abnormal degree of excitability. He could not bear the voices of his own children, their laughter so jarred upon his overstrung nerves; and at Hayes he purchased all the houses near his own, that he might not be disturbed by the noise of neighbours. Suddenly he took a dislike to Hayes; sold it; purchased a villa at Hampstead; and there too endeavoured to surround himself with solitude. At Burton Pynsent he conceived the idea of planting a considerable area with cedars; and as a sufficient supply could not be obtained in Somersetshire, he ordered them to be sent down from London, engaging relays of workmen to plant them, and insisting that the work should go on all night. His imagination would seem to have been pleased by the picturesque spectacle of the torchlight falling on the groups of labourers, and lighting up with flickering flames the swaying branches of the dark green trees. A man of abstemious habits and moderate appetite, he suddenly bestowed a singular amount of care on the supply of his table; and his cooks were all day employed in dressing dinners that their master might sit down at any moment his caprice dictated.*

* We are here following Macaulay, 'Critical and Historical Essays,' ii. 398.

While he was planting in Somersetshire, the Rockingham Ministry fell, not so much from any external attack as from a general conviction that the only possible Minister was Pitt. The King summoned him to London, where he arrived with mind and body in a heated and enfeebled condition. He undertook to form an administration on the basis of representing every party, or rather of treating every party as subservient to the King and himself. His influence, however, vast as it was, could not sweep aside every difficulty. The principal arose in connection with the position of Earl Temple, his brother-in-law, whom Pitt wished at first to place at the head of the Treasury. But the Earl refused to give up his brother George Grenville, unless he was admitted to an equal share of power and patronage. He also required that Lord Lyttelton should have a seat in the cabinet, and that he himself should be allowed to nominate his own Treasury Board. The negotiation between the two kinsmen was abruptly broken off; and Pitt poured out his magnificent contempt on the man whose advice he had at one time so highly valued. Had not the Earl, he said, fastened himself into his train, and acquired thereby an interest in and a connection with him, he might have crept out of life with as little interest as he crept in; and departed with no other degree of credit than that of adding a single unit to the bills of mortality. An almost equal degree of contempt was exhibited by Pitt in his communications with others. To one gentleman he sent a message, "that he might have an office if he would;" to a second, "that such an office was still vacant;" to a third, "that he must take such an office

or none;" Lord Scarborough and Mr. Dowdeswell were so offended by the imperiousness of his tone that they declined to take office. His vast popularity, his brilliant successes, and his consciousness of superior powers had fostered in him an imprudent arrogance, which a judgment weakened by disease failed to control.

The Ministry at length was complete. It has been extravagantly represented as the most extraordinary composite the world had ever seen. But, as a matter of fact, it consisted of some of the best men of the old Government reinforced by Pitt's friends and followers. The Duke of Grafton was placed at the head of the Treasury; the Marquis of Granby at the head of the Army. Lord Camden was made Chancellor; Lord Shelburne and General Conway Secretaries of State. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was Charles Townsend. Pitt, the chief Minister, took the privy seal, and, at the same time, parted with his popularity by removing to the Upper House as Earl of Chatham; though why this natural step should have excited so much odium it is difficult to understand.* Pitt, in his 60th year, and broken down in constitution, was unequal to the laborious duties of the House of Commons. But the nation had loved and trusted him as the Great Commoner, whose genius had awed senates and struck

* The French Minister, the Duc de Choiseul wrote to Guerchy, the French Ambassador at London:—"Nous ne pouvons comprendre ici quel a été le dessein de My Lord Chatham en quittant la Chambre des Communes. Il nous paroissoit que toute sa force consistoit dans sa continuation dans cette Chambre, et il pourroit bien se trouver comme Sampson après qu'on lui eût coupé les cheveux."

terror into King's councils. When he assumed a coronet and stood forward as the chosen of the Crown, a sudden and most unreasonable revulsion of feeling took place. He was compared to Pulteney, who, in like manner, had betrayed the people for the sake of an Earldom. The shops were filled with caricatures, and the press teemed with invectives and calumnies.

The Chatham administration was strong in debating power, and rich in practical ability. No Cabinet could be formed with men of greater intellectual eminence than Pitt, Camden, Shelburne, Townshend. And there was good reason to suppose that its somewhat heterogeneous materials might be fused into an harmonious whole by the dominant genius of its chief. Yet there can be no doubt that it was, from the outset, distasteful to the country. It was felt that Chatham's selection of men had been made on no definite principle. As Burke with elaborate exaggeration describes it, "He had put together a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dove-tailed; a cabinet so variously inlaid; such a piece of diversified mosaic; such a tessellated pavement without cement; here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white; patriots and courtiers; King's friends and Republicans; Whigs and Tories; treacherous friends and open enemies; that it was indeed a very curious show; but utterly unsafe to touch and unsure to stand on. The colleagues whom he had assorted at the same board stared at each other and were obliged to ask—Sir, your name?—Sir, you have the advantage of me,—Mr. Such-a-one—I beg a thousand pardons. I venture to say it did so happen that persons had a single office

divided between them who had never spoken to each other in their lives." The motley character of the Ministry, however, might have proved no insurmountable difficulty, and its chief might have retrieved his influence over the country, had he preserved any of his old discretion, or shown a disposition to confide in the colleagues he had chosen. But his dictatorial tone was not less offensive to them than to the people. In a few months he had grievously offended and driven from office four members of the Rockingham Government who had been induced to retain their posts, and whose services were undeniably valuable: Admirals Saunders and Keppel at the Admiralty, the Duke of Portland as Lord Chamberlain, and the Earl of Bessborough as Postmaster. His dictatorship was strongly satirised by a correspondent in the 'Public Advertiser,' who assumed the *nom de plume* of 'Whittington.*' He says:

"The author's spite [referring to the well-known 'Short Account of a late Short Administration'] against the Right Hon. William, Earl of Chatham, in the county of Kent, Viscount Pynsent, in the county of Somerset, appears, when he says, "they (the late ministers) were removed by a plan *settled* by that nobleman." How little expressive of his operation is the word *settled*! when we know full well, that, when *only* a great commoner, he refused to be responsible for any measures which he did not absolutely *guide*. The accountant, therefore, should have said *dictated* by the Earl of Chatham, as more suitable to his character, and

* This was either Edmund Burke, or his brother Richard.

to real facts, as is confirmed by the inquiry just published, as 'tis said by his quondam friend Earl Temple.

"Those two cronies, it seems, quarrelled about *dictation*; and the very man who a few years ago was glad to play *Bowman* to the great commoner at a city feast, stooping and rising for half an hour together, like the Chelsea water-works, on this occasion stood straight as a maypole, and refused bowing either *to* him, or *for* him, in the front of the stage, while he sat skulking in a side-box.

"On the whole it is next to *scandalum magnatum* to allege that the Earl of Chatham did anything less than dictate the late changes. He has, once more, deigned to take the reins of Government in his own hand, and will, no doubt, drive with his wonted speed, and raise a deal of dust around him. His horses are all matched to his mind; but as some of them are young and skittish, it is said he has adopted the new contrivance lately exhibited by Sir Francis Delaval on Westminster Bridge; whenever they begin to snort, and toss up their heads, he touches the spring, throws them loose, and away they go, leaving his Lordship safe and snug, and as much at ease as if he sat upon a wool-pack."

The first important measure of the Chatham Ministry was designed to meet the distress caused by an excessive scarcity of provisions. A proclamation was issued prohibiting the exportation of grain and the use of wheat for the purpose of distillation. This proceeding, when Parliament met, was violently attacked as unconstitutional, and defended by the Government as absolutely

necessary.* Ultimately all concerned in the embargo were protected by an act of indemnity. Chatham's first words in the House of Peers were uttered on this occasion, and were marked by much calmness and dignity. In a subsequent speech his imperious temper reasserted itself; and he addressed the Peers with a vehemence to which they were unaccustomed, and a superciliousness which they resented. Shortly afterwards, he resolved on bringing before Parliament the subject of the increasing territorial acquisitions of the East India Company (1767). But instead of confiding his intentions to his colleagues,† to Townshend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or General Conway, the leader of the Commons, he selected as his mouthpiece the vulgar and illiterate demagogue, Aldermam Beckford, whose name has descended to posterity on the strength of an insolent speech to his King which he did not deliver. The motion submitted, for examining into the state of the East India Company, was carried by 129 to 76 ; but it united against the Ministry all the Company's friends. The excitement was general; but the Minister who had provoked it, who was once so ready to ride upon the whirlwind and direct the storm, suddenly withdrew to Bath, where he occupied himself in endeavours to engage the support of the Bedfords and the Newcastles. After awhile the world heard that he was

* Camden, the Chancellor, incautiously turned it "at most a forty days' tyranny."

† He made his views known to Lord Shelburne, however, and accepted the latter's suggestions. The two statesmen desired to establish a firmer Parliamentary control over the Company, but were opposed by Charles Townshend.

better, and, on a certain day, would return to London. Attended by a splendid retinue of grooms and footmen, he got as far as Marlborough. There he engaged the Castle Inn, and shut himself up in gloomy seclusion for several weeks, refusing to see or correspond with his colleagues, showing little interest in the fortunes of his administration, and apparently indifferent to the welfare of his country. His colleagues could get no assistance from him in the conduct of public business. He wrote to the Duke of Grafton, in reference to the East India Company question, "that his fixed purpose had always been and still was, not to be a proposer of plans, but, as far as a seat in one House enabled him, an unbiassed judge of them!" What he meant, the Duke must have been puzzled to understand. His influence removed, the Cabinet fell a prey to internal dissensions, and was utterly unable to face the attacks of its numerous foes.

At length, in the spring of 1767, Chatham reached the metropolis, but, still unfit for the management of public affairs, retired to Hampstead. Here, too, he preserved the most complete seclusion. He would see nobody, write to nobody, do nothing. When the Duke of Grafton solicited an interview, if only for five minutes, he was told that it was impossible. The King sent frequent messages to inquire after his health, and begged of him to rouse himself to the performance of his public duties, assuring him of his continued support. It was useless. In answers written by Lady Chatham, for he seldom took pen in hand, he expressed his profound gratitude for the royal goodness; but declared he would not

yet see his colleagues or transact business. A little more time must be given to him.

The condition of the Ministry, and the state of affairs generally at this juncture, may be inferred from passages in Lord Charlemont's letters. Thus he writes in February: "Lord Chatham is daily expected, and till he arrives nothing worth informing you of is likely to happen. There has been, upon various topics, a great deal of conversation in the House of Commons, but no divisions. One thing, however, appears very extraordinary if not indecent; no member of the Opposition speaks without directly abusing Lord Chatham, and no friend ever rises to take his part. Is it possible that such a man can be friendless?" In April he writes: "Lord Chatham is still Minister, but how long he may continue so is a problem that would pose the deepest politician. The Opposition grows more and more violent, and seems to gain ground: his ill-health as yet prevents his doing any business. The Ministry is divided into as many parties as there are men in it; all complain of his want of participation. Charles Townshend is at open war,* Conway is angry, Lord Shelburne out of humour, and the Duke of Grafton by no means pleased."

Conceiving the air of Hampstead to be too sharp for him, Chatham was seized with a desire to repurchase Hayes; and, through the intervention of Lady Chatham with the new owner, a Mr. Walpole, his desire was grati-

* To Townshend's imperious conduct, and adoption of a hostile policy, must be partly ascribed the revolt of the American Colonies. Shelburne openly, and Conway and Camden privately, were in favour of conciliatory measures.

fied. He withdrew to the well-loved groves of Kent, and for many months an impenetrable curtain shut him out from the view of the world. The fact was, that by the use of excessively violent measures, he had been relieved from the physical tortures of the disease which had embittered his whole life ; but the gout had been driven inward so as to affect and overthrow his nervous system.* He was a victim to an obscure but painful form of hypochondriasis. His great intellect was enveloped in a cloud which he had not the strength to dissipate. It is to be regretted that at the outset he did not resign, alleging his ill-health as the reason. Had he done so, his name would have been free from the dishonouring association of measures introduced and carried out by his Cabinet, against which, had he been himself, he would have been the first to protest. During his long seclusion great changes took place in the Ministry over which he still nominally presided. Charles Townshend's remarkable career was cut short by a premature death (September 4th, 1767); and Lord North succeeded to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. Lord Northington and General Conway resigned. They were replaced by two members of the Bedford party, Lords Gower and Weymouth. In these changes Chatham was not consulted ; nor was his advice solicited in reference to the renewed attempt at the taxation of the American Colonies. A recent historian, speaking of the administration which gradually, by a double process of secession and aggrega-

* Chesterfield writes : " His physician had very ignorantly checked a coming fit of the gout, and scattered it about his body. It fell particularly upon his nerves."

tion, was substituted for that of Chatham, describes its policy in a few words: "its one aim was to exist." It was practically composed of the worst faction of the Whigs and of the new and increasingly powerful party of the King's friends. It existed, however, almost by virtue of its weakness; and, under the successive direction of the Duke of Grafton and Lord North, lasted from 1768 until the close of the American war of independence.

Chatham resigned on the 15th of October, 1768.* A more striking contrast cannot be imagined than that between the feeling of the country on this occasion, and that which was evinced on his dismissal in 1757, or his retirement from office in 1761. The former occasion was signalized by a general outburst of admiration and gratitude towards himself, and of indignation against his political opponents. Not only the attention of Great Britain but of all Europe was attracted by his resignation in 1761, and the event was regarded as affecting important interests in each quarter of the globe. But his resignation in 1768 was silently accepted by the people of Great Britain, and on the Continent of Europe it was almost unknown.

Lord Chatham's career may be divided into three chief periods, of which the opening and the closing are very splendid and picturesque, affording to the biographer abundant materials for a stirring narrative. But the second period, dating from 1761 to the close of 1768, is

* His resignation was induced by his resentment at the Duke of Grafton's proposed dismissal of Lord Shelburne from his Secretaryship. Shelburne, by resigning (October 4th), forestalled the Duke.

in every way melancholy to record. It shows him enfeebled by disease, a prey to arrogance and irritability, offending his ablest supporters, lending the sanction of his great name to measures opposed to his most cherished principles, and losing the love and veneration of the people in unsuccessful efforts to propitiate the favour of the Crown. It is with a feeling of thankfulness that we reach the end of a chapter his admirers would gladly erase from the story of his life: a painful chapter, for it tells of the weaknesses of a man of supreme genius, who had rendered inestimable services to his country in a season of great peril. Happily the curtain rises now on a very different scene.

V.

CHATHAM had spent nearly two years in seclusion when his gout returned, and by its return relieved him from the cruel pressure that had so long enfeebled his nervous system. His intellect regained its clearness ; his spirits their vigour ; his imagination its strength. And with this great recovery came back his old interest in political affairs and his old capacity for dealing with them. But he had at first to submit to some such experiences as those which the American essayist has so pleasantly related of Rip Van Winkle. In the fairy tale the current of life stands still while the beautiful princess sleeps ; and when her lover's kiss arouses her from her slumber, she finds everything in art and nature as it was before her long period of repose began. " All things in their place remained as all were ordered, ages since." But when Rip Van Winkle descends from the haunted mountains and reappears in his native valley, he discovers that, during his absence, men have come and gone ; the old world has passed away and a new one arisen. So it was with Chatham. Men and things had not rested while he lay ill among the wooded shades of Hayes. Faction had been at work, and an unwise policy had pursued its dangerous activity. He found a new Ministry in power, and many of his former colleagues sunk into obscurity or dead. One of the figures now most conspicuous in the parliamentary arena, Lord North, had

made no sign before his retirement. Under the pseudonym of "Junius,"* a writer of unusual power and extraordinary virulence, had shaken the peace of cabinets. The unhappy disputes with the American Colonies had been revived. Wilkes, though formally outlawed, had returned from exile, had been elected for Middlesex, and was engaged in a struggle with the Court and the House of Commons which threatened to endanger the security of the Constitution. Chatham had much to learn as to the position of parties and questions ; but, this knowledge gained, he had no difficulty in applying the principles of truth, justice, and liberty to which he had always been faithful.

Parliament was divided into three sections ; one following the Ministry, another the Grenvilles, and a third the Marquis of Rockingham. The two latter frequently combined to oppose the former, but were generally separated by private as well as public differences, George Grenville resenting the severe criticisms he had undergone at the hands of Burke. Chatham's opinions drew him towards the Rockingham section, but the past rose up as a barrier between them ; Chatham being unable to forget he had been injured by them, and they to forget that they had injured him. Besides, his affections, always deep and earnest, attracted him to the side of his

* The letters of "Junius" appeared in Woodfall's 'Public Advertiser' in the years 1769, 1770, 1771, and 1772. They were 44 in number. Others appeared under the signatures of "Philo Junius," "Atticus," etc. The authorship has been ascribed to Chesterfield, Edmund Burke, Lord George Sackville, Gerard Hamilton, Lord Lyttelton, Adair, Horne Tooke, and Sir Philip Francis ; the weight of evidence inclining to the last named.

brother-in-law, who had coalesced with George Grenville. He was formally and sincerely reconciled to the Grenvilles; and he also held out the hand of fellowship, after awhile, to Lord Rockingham. During the remainder of his career he may be said to have occupied an intermediate position, acting absolutely neither with the one nor the other, directly opposing neither the one nor the other, but surrounded by a group of able and devoted adherents, among whom may be named Lord Camden, Colonel Barrè, the eloquent Dunning, and the Earl of Shelburne, one of the ablest members of a house that has always been rich in ability.

The Middlesex election, however, united the different parts of the Opposition by a common interest. It was the first subject on which Chatham broke his protracted silence. At once it was apparent that all his early ardour lived again; and that his eloquence displayed the warmth, the colour, and the exuberance which it had displayed in the golden days when the House of Commons trembled before it. It is necessary here to indicate the course which the Wilkes difficulty had taken. The House of Commons, under the guidance of the Government, who acted in compliance with the strongly expressed wishes of the King, had treated the election of Wilkes as a defiance, and expelled him as a libeller. He was at once re-elected, whereupon the House resolved: "That Mr. Wilkes, having been in this session of Parliament expelled the House, was and is incapable of being elected a member to serve in the present Parliament;" and the Speaker issued his writ for a new election. This unconstitutional proceeding Middlesex

resented by again returning Wilkes; and the House was driven forward to attempt a fresh encroachment on the rights of the electors. It declared that Colonel Luttrell, whom Wilkes had defeated by an immense majority, ought to have been returned, and was legally the representative of Middlesex; a declaration which, in effect, transferred the right of election from the electors to the House, and placed it in the power of the majority to unseat at any time an obnoxious member. All England took part with Middlesex in opposing this unjust as well as imprudent assumption. Wilkes, made a hero in spite of himself,—and few popular demagogues have ever been less heroic,—was elected an Alderman of London; and the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Livery petitioned the King to dissolve a Parliament which had openly transgressed the rights of the people. With that characteristic obstinacy which his narrow intellect mistook for firmness, the King rejected the petition; while he encouraged the Ministers to prosecute “Junius,” who was attacking them with equal power and unscrupulousness.

Chatham now stood forward (1770) to protest against the usurpation of the House of Commons. He denounced (May 1st) the vote which had declared the election of Colonel Luttrell, as a gross invasion of the rights of election, a dangerous violation of the English Constitution, a treacherous surrender of the invaluable privilege of the franchise, and a corrupt sacrifice of their own honour. They had stripped the statute-book of its highest ornaments to gild the wings, not of prerogative, but of unprincipled faction and lawless domination. So far he was at one with Lord Rockingham; but the

leader of the old Whigs fell behind him when he endeavoured to make the Lower House more truly representative of the country by adding to the strength of the county members. Such a proposal would now-a-days be considered inadequate in itself, and erroneous in principle; but it went beyond the ideas of even the most liberal minds among Chatham's contemporaries, and was one of many proofs of his singular grasp of the true elements of Constitutional government. In 1772 he warmly protested against the Royal Marriage Bill, which provided that no member of the Royal Family under twenty-five years of age should marry without the Sovereign's consent. On this question the Opposition split up again into sections, and the division between them deepened until reconciliation became impossible.

His foresight and statesmanlike judgment were also shown in his steadfast opposition to the disastrous measures by which Lord North and the King, for on them the responsibility devolves, plunged England into a disastrous war with her American Colonies. It was the King who insisted on the tea-duty being retained, after all other taxation had been abandoned; and thus led to the outbreak at Boston, in December, 1773, when a mob boarded some English tea-ships in the harbour, and flung their cargoes overboard. Both in America and England this event, however, was regretted by moderate minds; and Washington was as ready as Chatham to support the Government in a demand for redress. Lord North himself was secretly in favour of conciliation. Not so the King; he was bent upon turning his American

subjects into rebels by treating them as rebellious. The Ministers introduced various "very determined" measures, and despatched troops to America to enforce their execution, while the King exulted at what he conceived to be a vigorous exhibition of authority. "The Colonies," he said, "must either triumph or submit. If we take the resolute part, they will undoubtedly be very meek." Yes; meek as Englishmen generally are under an outrage or an insult! Massachusetts called out and armed its militia; and all the other States, except Georgia, espoused its cause, and sent their delegates to the Congress which, on the 4th of September, 1774, met at Philadelphia. Still, there was time for peace; Virginia, and the States generally, shrank from rising against the mother-country. In January, 1775, Chatham who had taken Benjamin Franklin into his councils,* made a great effort to avert a rupture. All his conceptions were thorough; and this one was admirable in its thoroughness. The Bill which he introduced abandoned the claim to tax the Colonies, ordered the recall of the British troops, repealed the vexatious Acts of Parliament passed since 1763, and provided for the due recognition and observance of the Colonial charters; while it summoned a Colonial assembly to meet and discuss the means by which the Colonies might defray their share of the public debt. The Bill was somewhat rudely drawn, as Chatham acknowledged; but it contained all the materials for a satisfactory settlement of the difficulties

* A full account of his discussions with the American statesman will be found in the 'Memoirs of the Life of Benjamin Franklin.'

which had arisen, and if accepted, would have averted that dark episode in our history on which every Englishman looks back with shame and regret. The House of Lords, however, refused to consider it. King, Ministers, and Parliament seemed alike bent on rushing precipitately and without reflection into the foaming breakers which so clearly menaced the safety of the ship of the State. In vain Chatham warned them that they could not hope to prevail in an unjust cause and against a united America; that they would be forced ultimately to retreat. In vain he solicited them to avoid so humiliating and disgraceful a necessity. In vain he addressed the peers in his most impressive and earnest tones: — “With a dignity becoming your exalted situation,” he said, “make the first advances to concord, to peace, and happiness; for *that* is your true dignity,—to act with prudence and justice. That *you* should first concede is obvious, from sound and rational policy. Concession comes with better grace and more salutary effect from superior power; it reconciles superiority of power with the feelings of men; and establishes solid confidence on the foundation of affection and gratitude. So thought,” he continued, “a wise poet and a man wise in political sagacity; the friend of Mæcenæ and the eulogist of Augustus. To him, the adopted son and successor of the first Cæsar, to him, the master of the world, he wisely urged this conduct of prudence and dignity :

“*Tuque prior, tu parces; genus qui ducis Olympo;
Proijce tala manu.*”

Every motive, therefore,” he added, “of justice and of

policy, of dignity and of prudence, urges you to allay the ferment in America by a removal of your troops from Boston—by a repeal of your Acts of Parliament—and by demonstration of amicable dispositions towards your Colonies. On the other hand, every danger and every hazard impend, to deter you from perseverance in your present ruinous measures:—foreign war hanging over your heads by a slight and brittle thread,—France and Spain watching your conduct, and waiting for the maturity of your errors,—with a vigilant eye to America and the temper of your Colonies, more than to their own concerns, be they what they may.” But the advice of the veteran statesman was rejected; his predictions were slighted. Thereupon the American Congress ordered the levy of an army, and entrusted its command to George Washington, a man cast in the old heroic mould, of a severe genius and a chivalrous devotion to duty which seemed to elevate him above the ordinary passions of humanity. The war at first was marked by varying fortunes; but the determination of the Colonists every day grew sterner, and on the 4th of July, 1776, the delegates in Congress adopted their celebrated Declaration of Independence.*

In the spring of 1777, the British Government made a vigorous effort to crush the revolt. But they could not manufacture great military commanders; and though our troops exhibited their accustomed valour, they fought with less than their accustomed spirit. An irretrievable disaster was the surrender of General Burgoyne and his

* “America,” said Camden, “is gone for ever.”—‘Autobiography of the Duke of Grafton,’ quoted by Lord E. Fitzmaurice, ii. 320.

army at Saratoga on the 13th of October. No such disgrace had ever befallen our arms; and the news went to the heart of England with a pang of humiliation. At this very time Chatham, who had again risen from a bed of sickness, was imploring Parliament to make such concession as might even at the last hour prevent the dismemberment of the empire. "My Lords," he said, "you cannot conquer America. What is your present situation there? We do not know the worst, but we know that in these campaigns we have done nothing and suffered much. Besides the sufferings, perhaps *total loss*, of the Northern force [this was spoken in November; in December the country learned the truth of Chatham's forebodings]; the best appointed army that ever took the field, commanded by Sir William Howe, has retired from the American lines; *he was obliged* to relinquish his attempt, and, with great delay and danger, to adopt a new and distinct plan of operations. We shall know, and in any event have reason to lament, what may have happened since. As to conquest, therefore, my Lords, I repeat, it is impossible. You may swell every expense, and every effort, still more extravagantly; pile and accumulate every assistance you can buy or borrow; traffic and barter with every little pitiful German Prince that sells and sends his subjects to the shambles of a foreign Prince; your efforts are for ever vain and impotent—doubly so from this mercenary aid on which you rely; for it irritates, to an incurable resentment, the minds of your enemies, —to overawe them with the mercenary sons of rapine and plunder; devoting them and their possessions to the

rapacity of hireling cruelty ! If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms—never—never—never.”

Then, with a generous indignation inspiring his lofty eloquence, he inveighed against the employment of the Indian and his scalping-knife as allies against the children of England.

“Who is the man,” he asked, “that has dared to authorise and associate to our arms the tomahawk and scalping-knife of the savage ? To call into civilised alliance the wild and inhuman savage of the woods ; to delegate to the merciless Indian the defence of disputed rights, and to wage the horrors of his barbarous war against our brethren ? ”

In the course of the debate, Lord Suffolk, one of the Secretaries of State, defended the employment of Indians.* “It was perfectly justifiable,” he said, “to use all the means that God and Nature put into our hands.” This provoked from Chatham one of his finest outbursts. Rising hastily, and leaning on his crutch, he exclaimed :—

“I am astonished ! shocked ! to hear such principles confessed—to hear them avowed in this House or in this country—principles equally unconstitutional, inhuman, and unchristian !

“My Lords, I did not intend to have encroached

* It was asserted that Chatham himself had formerly sanctioned their engagement as auxiliaries ; but satisfactory proof was given that though this had been done by the Administration of which he was a member, it was without his knowledge.

again upon your attention ; but I cannot repress my indignation—I feel myself impelled by every duty. My Lords, we are called upon as members of this House, as men, as Christian men, to protest against such notions standing near the throne, polluting the ear of Majesty. ‘That God and Nature put into our hands!’ I know not what ideas that lord may entertain of God and Nature ; but I know that such abominable principles are equally abhorrent to religion and humanity. What ! to attribute the sacred sanction of God and Nature to the massacres of the Indian scalping-knife—to the cannibal savage torturing, murdering, roasting, and eating—literally, my Lords, *eating* the mangled victims of his barbarous battles ! Such horrible notions shock every precept of religion, divine or natural, and every generous feeling of humanity. And, my Lords, they shock every sentiment of honour ; they shock me as a lover of honourable war, and a detester of murderous barbarity !

“ These abominable principles, and this more abominable avowal of them, demand the most decisive indignation. I call upon that Right Reverend Bench, those holy ministers of the Gospel, and pious pastors of our Church ; I conjure them to join in the holy work, and vindicate the religion of their God ;—I appeal to the wisdom and the law of this learned Bench to defend and support the justice of their country ;—I call upon the Bishops, to interpose the unsullied sanctity of their lawn ;—upon the learned judges, to interpose the purity of their ermine to save us from this pollution ;—I call upon the honour of your Lordships, to

reverence the dignity of your ancestors, and to maintain your own;—I call upon the spirit and humanity of my country, to vindicate the national character;—I invoke the genius of the constitution. From the tapestry that adorns these walls, the immortal ancestor * of this noble Lord [Suffolk] frowns with indignation at the disgrace of his country. In vain he led your victorious fleets against the boasted Armada of Spain; in vain he defended and established the honour, the liberties, the religion, the *Protestant religion*, of this country against the arbitrary cruelties of Popery and the Inquisition, if these more than Popish cruelties and Inquisitorial practices are let loose among us; to turn forth into our settlements, among our ancient connexions, friends, and relations, the merciless cannibal, thirsting for the blood of man, woman, and child! to send forth the infidel savage—against whom? against your Protestant brethren; to lay waste their country, to desolate their dwellings, and extirpate their race and name, with those horrible hell-hounds of savage war! —*hell-hounds, I say, of savage war!* Spain armed herself with blood-hounds to extirpate the wretched natives of America, and we improve on the inhuman example even of Spanish cruelty; we turn loose these savage hell-hounds against our brethren and countrymen in America, of the same language, laws, liberties, and religion; endeared to us by every tie that should sanctify humanity.

“My Lords, this awful subject, so important to our

* Howard, Earl of Effingham, famous for his services against the Spanish Armada.

honour, our constitution, and our religion, demands the most solemn and effectual inquiry. And I again call upon your Lordships, and the united powers of the State, to examine it thoroughly and decisively, and to stamp upon it an indelible stigma of the public abhorrence. And I again implore those holy prelates of our religion to do away these iniquities from among us. Let them perform a lustration; let them purify this House and this country from this sin.

“My Lords, I am old and weak, and at present unable to say more; but my feelings and indignation were too strong to have said less. I could not have slept this night in my bed, nor reposed my head on my pillow, without giving this vent to my eternal abhorrence of such preposterous and enormous principles.”

In respect to the ties by which the Colonies should be united to the mother country, as in respect to the principles of representation and the freedom of the press, Chatham was in advance of most of his contemporaries. He anticipated the policy which now governs our Colonial administration, or rather that policy of federation into which some enlightened statesmen desire to see it transformed. His plan for conciliating America was that of a federal alliance between it and Great Britain, which should preserve the supreme authority of the latter, while it left to the Colonies the most unrestricted liberty in all matters of internal administration. Had Chatham been restored to power, and heartily supported by the King and the country, it is possible that his plan

might, even at the last hour, have brought back the States to their allegiance. And it is allowable for those who rejoice at the prosperity of the great American Republic, to believe, nevertheless, that it would have been better for America, England, and the world if no separation had taken place.

It is important to observe that Chatham, an Englishman to the backbone, proud of his country and of her glorious past, always cherishing the remembrance of her glorious achievements, was far from advocating an acknowledgment of American independence. The Rockingham Whigs, having lost all hope of concessions on either side, looked upon the revolted Colonies as finally sundered from the Empire, and regarded a prolongation of the war with dismay from the extent to which it weakened England in the face of alarming European complications. France had recognised the independence of the States (February, 1778), and there could be no doubt that Spain would follow her example. We should, therefore, be called upon to encounter "a world in arms." Terrified at the prospect, Lord North hastened to accomplish the prediction of Chatham, and carried hurriedly through Parliament a series of measures which granted to the Colonies all they had ever demanded. The country poured recruits into the ranks of the army, but it did so in a spirit of despair rather than of calm resolution. The King alone continued to breathe of war. Edmund Burke inclined, as became the chief of the Rockingham Whigs in the House of Commons, to a recognition of the independence of America, and the conclusion of an alliance offensive

and defensive. Not, he said, as a matter of choice, but of hard and overpowering necessity. "On the day that he first heard of the American States having claimed independency, it made him sick at heart; it struck him to the soul, because he saw it was a claim essentially injurious to Great Britain, and one which she could never get rid of; never! never! never! It was not to be thought, therefore, that he wished for the independency of America. Far from it. He felt it as a circumstance exceedingly detrimental to the fame, and exceedingly detrimental to the interests of his country. But when, by a wrong management of the cards, a gamester had lost much, it was right for him to make the most of the game as it then stood, and to take care that he did not lose more."

The eyes of the country were once more turning towards Chatham as the only man who would be trusted to save the Commonwealth; and the King and Lord Bute* had

* The negotiations which Lord Bute carried on through Sir J. Wright and Dr. Addington could hardly have been unknown to or unauthorised by the King. Yet, in March, 1778, when Lord North wished to resign, and urged the King to send for Chatham, he positively refused; and insisted that North, as his confidential minister, should remain at the head of the Treasury. He would consent only to the accession of Lord Shelburne and Colonel Barré, and to the services of Lord Chatham if offered through Lord North. This, of course, was impossible. Chatham could not have served the country unless he had been supreme in the Cabinet. As Shelburne said, "Lord Chatham must be the dictator." Nothing came, therefore, of Lord North's proposal. Whether Chatham if he had returned to power, would have preserved the connection between England and her colonies, is a disputed question. We are disposed to answer it in the affirmative. Those critics who take up the negative forget that in North America still existed a considerable body of loyalists, that the war had entailed severe sufferings on the people of the States, that the American army

actually entered into communication with him to ascertain his terms, when, on the 7th of April, the Duke of Richmond moved an address to the Throne, entreating the King to dismiss his Ministers, and advising him to recall his forces by sea and land from the revolted provinces, and to adopt amicable means only to recover their friendship, at heart, if not their allegiance. The Earl had been absent from Parliament for some weeks, but though very ill, resolved to be present on this occasion, and once more to protest against the dismemberment of the Empire. He was in so excited a state that his medical advisers would fain have kept him at home, but he was not to be overruled; and accompanied by his son William, then only in his nineteenth year, but already recognised as a young man of high promise, and his son-in-law, Lord Mahon, he repaired to Westminster. Having rested in the Lord Chancellor's room, he entered the House when the debate had begun,

was ill-paid and ill-fed, and that its victories were due quite as much to the errors of the British government as to the military capacity of its generals or the courage of its soldiers. Chatham's idea was not to conquer America, but to deprive it of the advantages of its alliance with France, while he removed the causes of the quarrel by repealing the vexatious legislation in which the British Parliament had so unwisely indulged. He would have withdrawn the English troops from all the American interior, holding only a few strongly fortified positions on the coast, and then have diverted all the naval and military resources of the country against France. Meantime, he would have trusted to the pacific influence of those ties of a common kindred, race, and religion by which the Colonies were bound to the mother country. The relation established between them would eventually have assumed something of the character of that which now exists between England and the Dominion of Canada.—See LORD E. FITZMAURICE, '*Life of William Earl of Shelburne*,' iii. 26-28.

still leaning on his young attendants. He was dressed in a rich suit of black velvet, with his legs swathed to the knees in flannel. His wig was so large that little more of his countenance could be seen than his aquiline nose, and the penetrating eyes which retained the glow of their wonted fires. The peers rose, and made way for him to pass to his place ; a courtesy which he acknowledged by bowing to them with graceful dignity. Having taken his seat, he listened while the Duke of Richmond brought forward his motion, and Lord Weymouth argued against it. Then, leaning on his crutches and supported by his relatives, he rose and spoke,—at first in tones which were scarcely audible, but gradually recovering his old clearness and melody of voice, and using much animated and appropriate action.

“I thank God,” he said, “that I have been enabled to come here this day, to perform my duty, and to speak on a subject which is so deeply impressed on my mind. I am old and infirm—have one foot, more than one foot, in the grave—I have risen from my bed to stand up in the cause of my country—perhaps never again to speak in this House !”

The peers listened with the most marked reverence and attention, and so profound was the stillness that the dropping of a handkerchief might have been heard.*

After recapitulating the events of the American War, the measures which he had denounced, and the evil consequences which he had foretold,—adding at the end of each period, “And so it proved !” he continued :

* See Seward's ‘Anecdotes of Distinguished Persons ;’ and Thackeray's ‘History of the Earl of Chatham.’

“My Lords, I rejoice that the grave has not closed upon me; that I am still alive to lift up my voice against the dismemberment of this ancient and most noble monarchy! Pressed down as I am by the hand of infirmity, I am little able to assist my country in this most perilous conjuncture; but, my Lords, while I have sense and memory, I will never consent to deprive the royal offspring of the House of Brunswick, the heirs of the Princess Sophia, of their fairest inheritance. I will first see the Prince of Wales, the Bishop of Osnaburg, and the other rising hopes of the royal family brought down to the committee, and assent to such an alienation. Where is the man that will dare to advise it? My Lords, his Majesty succeeded to an empire as great in extent as its reputation was unsullied. Shall we tarnish the lustre of this nation by an ignominious surrender of its rights and fairest possessions? Shall this great kingdom, that has survived, whole and entire, the Danish depredations, the Scottish inroads, and the Norman conquest; that has stood the threatened invasion of the Spanish Armada, now fall prostrate before the House of Bourbon? Surely, my Lords, this nation is no longer what it was! Shall a people that, seventeen years ago, was the terror of the world, now stoop so low as to tell its ancient inveterate enemy, ‘Take all we have, only give us peace?’ It is impossible!

“I wage war with no man, or set of men. I wish for none of their employments; nor would I co-operate with men who still persist in unretracted error; or who, instead of acting on a firm decisive line of conduct, halt between two opinions, where there is no

middle path. In God's name, if it is absolutely necessary to declare either for peace or war, and the former cannot be preserved with honour, why is not the latter commenced without hesitation? I am not, I confess, well-informed of the resources of this kingdom, but I trust it has still sufficient to maintain its just rights, though I know them not. But, my Lords, any state is better than despair. Let us at least make one effort; and if we must fall, let us fall like men!"

When Chatham sat down, Lord Temple said to him, in allusion to some plan for the pacification of America, "You have forgot to mention what we have been talking about. Shall I get up?" Lord Chatham replied, "No, no, I will do it by-and-by."

The Duke of Richmond then replied. He spoke of Chatham with the greatest courtesy, but in the course of his remarks gave expression to sentiments with which, as was evident by his countenance and gestures, the Earl disagreed. When the Duke sat down, Chatham made an effort to rise; but after several attempts to maintain an erect position, suddenly pressed his hand to his heart, and fell down in convulsions. The Duke of Cumberland, Lord Temple, Lord Stamford, and some other peers who were sitting near, caught him in their arms.* Amidst a scene of singular emotion

* "Every person was upon his legs in a moment, hurrying from one place to another, some sending for assistance, others producing salts, and others reviving spirits; many crowding about the Earl to observe his countenance: all affected, most part really concerned, and even those who might have felt a secret pleasure at the accident, yet put on the appearance of distress, except only the Earl of Mansfield, who sat still, almost as much unmoved as the senseless body itself."—*Lord Camden to the Duke of Grafton.*

and disorder, the debate was adjourned, and the House cleared. The dying statesman was carried to the residence of the Sergeant-at-Arms in Downing Street, where medical assistance was procured, and he so far recovered as to be able to bear removal to Hayes. In that well-loved home he lingered for a few weeks, soothed by the affectionate attention of his wife and children. A devoted husband, a fond father,* he had never shown towards them that occasional irritability and arrogance which had marked his intercourse with others; and they had repaid him with the tenderest admiration. On the 11th of May, he expired, preserving to the last his fortitude and calmness. He was in his 70th year.

The news of his death awakened throughout the kingdom a feeling of profound sorrow; and friends and foes united to do honour to his vast services and lofty genius. The King alone showed no concern.† The House of Commons voted at once a public funeral, and made provision for the payment of his debts. An annuity of £4000 was settled upon his heirs, Lord Nugent seizing the occasion to make known a last instance of the deceased statesman's exalted patriotism. His eldest son, Lord Pitt, having been ordered to join the garrison at Gibraltar,

* While his health permitted, he never suffered a day to pass without giving a lesson of some kind to his children; and seldom without reading a chapter of the Bible with them.

† Lord Brougham comments very justly on "the truly savage feeling,"—a hatred, says Buckle, that seemed barely compatible with a sane mind,—which George the 3rd cherished towards Chatham. See ADOLPHUS, 'History of George III.,' ii. 568; BROUGHAM, 'Sketches of Statesmen,' i. 22, 23; BUCKLE, 'History of Civilization,' i. 408.

had repaired to his father's death-bed to say farewell. "Go, my son," said Chatham, "go where your country calls you; let her engross all your attention; spare not a moment which is due to her service in weeping over an old man who will soon be no more." The City of London petitioned that the Earl's remains might be deposited beneath the roof of its Cathedral of St. Paul; but arrangements had already been made for their interment in Westminster Abbey. They lay in state in the Painted Chamber at Westminster on the 7th and 8th of June; and on the 9th were borne, with the pomp of solemn pageantry, to their last resting-place near the northern door of the Abbey. Close at hand sleeps his great contemporary, Mansfield, and, within a narrow area, reposes the dust of his illustrious son, of that son's illustrious rival, Fox, of William Wilberforce, and Grattan, and one who resembled Chatham in his patriotic pride, the gifted Canning. They seem all covered by the shadow of Chatham's stately monument, with its effigy "graven by a cunning hand,"* so worthy of the man, so faithfully preserving the marked features of that regal countenance. The generation which reared this noble memorial of a country's gratitude has passed away; and the time has come when its judgments can be impartially reviewed by posterity, and rectified or adopted. So far as Chatham is concerned, history deliberately declares—and all Englishmen gladly acknowledge—that among England's "illustrious sons of long, long ages" none has left a purer fame, none has

* Executed by the sculptor Bacon.

deserved better of the Commonwealth, than William Pitt, Earl of Chatham.

"In him, Demosthenes was heard again,
 Liberty taught him her Athenian strain,
 She clothed him with authority and awe,
 Spoke from his lips, and in his looks gave law.
 His speech, his form, his action, full of grace,
 And all his country beaming in his face,
 He stood, as some inimitable hand
 Would strive to make a Paul or Tully stand.
 No sycophant or slave that dared oppose
 Her sacred cause, but trembled when he rose.
 And every venal stickler for the yoke,
 Felt himself crushed at the first word he spoke." *

Cowper, Table Talk.

The strongest proof of Chatham's greatness is the influence he exercised upon his contemporaries. He

* Lord Lyttelton (the second lord, born 1746, died 1779, the hero of the ghost story told by Boswell (a), thus describes Chatham's oratory (b) :—
 "The two principal orators of the present age (and one of them, perhaps, a greater than has been produced in any age) are, the Earls of Mansfield and Chatham. The former is a great man; *Ciceronian*, but, I should think, inferior to Cicero: the latter is a greater man; *Demosthenean*, but superior to Demosthenes. The first formed himself on the model of the great Roman orator; he studied, translated, rehearsed, and acted his orations; the second disdained imitation, and was himself a model of eloquence, of which no idea can be formed, but by those who have seen and heard him. His words have sometimes frozen my young blood into stagnation, and sometimes made it pace in such a hurry through my veins that I could scarce support it. He, however, embellished his ideas by classical amusements, and occasionally read the sermons of Barrow, which he considered as a mine of nervous expressions; but, not content to correct and instruct his imagination by the works of mortal men, he borrowed his noblest images from the language of inspiration."

(a) It is repeated by Sir Walter Scott in his 'Letters on Demonology.'

(b) In the Letters attributed to him.

played in the political world a similar part to that which was played in the religious world by Wesley and Whitefield, and by Thomson and Cowper in the world of letters. English Society, at the time when his sun rose above the horizon, was sunk in the lethargy of material prosperity. Its degraded condition is very plainly exhibited in Brown's celebrated 'Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times'; an "estimate" confirmed in all essential particulars by the contemporary memoirs of Walpole, Lord Hervey, and Bubb Doddington. We read with disgust, not unmingled with astonishment, of its rampant affectation and folly, of its vain, luxurious, and selfish effeminacy, of its moral weakness, its lewdness, its cowardice, and its corruption. What is to be said of a people who suffered Prince Charles and a handful of Highlanders to travel to the centre of the kingdom unopposed? Of a people who, as Professor Smyth remarks,* offered no remonstrances when Hessians and Hanoverians were imported for their defence? We see the grandeur of Chatham in the new impulse he gave to the energies of a nation thus grievously enfeebled. At his summons "they started from their trance";† they put forth all their powers; and they defeated their

* Prof. Smyth, 'Lectures on Modern History,' ii. 289. The lectures in this work devoted to the American War supply a very intelligible explanation of the position with respect to it assumed by Chatham.

† Sainte-Beuve, in his essay on Gibbon (*Causeries de Lundi*), points out that the future historian, then a comparatively young man, came under the influence of the great Minister. "For a time," he says, "amid the perils of the Seven Years' War, Gibbon became again an Englishman through the eloquence of Pitt. He procured an appointment as Captain of Militia, and seemed to be stirred with the breath of patriotic enthusiasm.'

enemies in every quarter of the globe. He taught them to abhor political corruption, to defy aristocratic greed, to value the independence of the subject. To the man who did a work so noble, may be forgiven some outbursts of theatrical ostentation, some defects of character. To the man who "with one hand wielded the democracy of England, and with the other smote the House of Bourbon," it may be forgiven that in all things he was not superior to his age. But it is a significant fact that his moral elevation made itself felt, sooner or later, even by those who at first regarded him with suspicion or dislike. Such was the case with George the 2nd; such was the case with Colonel Barré, a man of no ordinary talents; such was the case with the Earl of Shelburne, that keen and profound observer of motives and conduct. It was acknowledged by so genial an opponent as Lord North; it was felt by a nature so mean as that of the Duke of Newcastle. The measure of Chatham's achievements must not be limited to the military and naval successes obtained during his first glorious administration: but must be understood as including the impulse he gave to the patriotic sentiment; the example he afforded of disinterestedness and political integrity; and the popular enthusiasm he directed against the divine right of prerogative and the tradition of official corruption.*

* "There was this difference between his conduct and that of his contemporaries. His ends were invariably noble. . . He might flatter Lady Yarmouth, but it was not in order to retain the Post Office; he might come down to the House of Lords, robed like some ancient senator about to die for his country, but he would throw them down a dagger on the floor of the House of Commons. Ambition was the lodestone of his life, but it

was ambition associated with worthy objects; the reputation of his country abroad, the integrity of her free institutions at home. And precisely in proportion as his countrymen recognised this to be the fact, they forgave the affectation and the mystery, the waywardness and the contradictory conduct. . . His personality, which his contemporaries alone would properly appreciate, was his strength. He possessed the rare quality of transfusing others with his own enthusiasm, and making himself the incarnation of the public hopes and fears. He believed that he alone could save the nation, and the nation thought so too. No man could so readily grasp the chief feature of a difficult situation, or so easily lay down the main lines of the necessary measures."—LORD E. FITZMAURICE, 'Life of William, Earl of Shelburne,' iii. 32-34.

BOOK III.
EDMUND BURKE.



A.D. 1780-1797.

[It is impossible to understand the career or character of Edmund Burke without a careful study of his *Works*. The edition to which we have referred is that of 1808, in ten vols., but a quarto edition was published in 1827. His *Correspondence* was given to the world in 1844. Numerous biographies and biographical studies have appeared; the best are those by *Prior* (ed. 1826); *Dr. Croly* (1840); *Napier* (1862); *John Morley* (1867); and *Thomas Macknight* (1858). For the general history of his period the principal authorities are *Massey's History of the Reign of George the Third (ut antè)*; *Earl Russell's Memorials of Charles James Fox*; *The Grenville Papers*; *Life and Letters of Earl of Shelburne*, by Lord E. Fitzmaurice; *Lord Stanhope's Life of William Pitt*; *J. Adolphus, History of the Reign of George the 3rd*; *Professor Smyth, Lectures on Modern History*; *Sir T. Erskine May, Constitutional History of England*; *Duke of Buckingham's Memoirs of the Courts and Cabinets of George the 3rd*; *The Bedford Correspondence*, etc. etc. For the trial of Warren Hastings, see *Macaulay's famous Essay*; *Madame D'Arblay's Diary*; *Mill's History of British India*, etc. etc.]

Born at Dublin, Jan. 1, 1730
 Enters Trinity College, Dublin, 1743
 Takes degree of M.A., 1751
 Publishes "Vindication of Natural Society," 1756
 Publishes "Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful," 1757
 His marriage to Miss Nugent, 1757
 Private Secretary to W. G. Hamilton, 1766
 Member for Wendover, 1766
 Publishes "On the Cause of the Present Discontents," 1770
 Member for Bristol, November, 1779
 Speech on Financial Reform, 1780
 Member for Malton, 1780
 Becomes Paymaster of the Forces, 1782
 Holds the same office in the

North and Fox ministry, 1783
 Retires from office, 1783
 Impeaches Warren Hastings, 1787
 Speech against the French Revolution, February, 1790
 Publishes "Reflections on the Revolution of France," 1790
 Severs his political connection with Fox, May 6, 1791
 Retires from Parliamentary life, June 25, 1794
 Loses his only son, Aug. 2, 1794
 Receives pension of £3700 a year, 1795
 Publishes "Letters on the Proposals for Peace," 1796-1797
 Produces his "Letter to a Noble Lord," 1796
 Publishes his "Thoughts on a Regicide Peace," 1797
 Dies at Beaconsfield, Saturday, July 8, 1797

EDMUND BURKE.

A. D. 1730-1797.

I.

A FOREMOST place among our English Party-leaders, as well as among our orators and men of letters, must be given to Edmund Burke. To every lover of genius, high principle, and patriotism his memory must be dear, though we may think that his political judgment was sometimes at fault, and that his statesmanship occasionally was too much a matter of impulse. His literary productions are justly ranked among our English classics; and his speeches regarded as models of dignified if too luxuriant eloquence, in which, however, pomp of language is never used to disguise poverty of thought. And his career, apart from all other considerations, has its interest and value as an illustration of the fact that the eulogium passed upon our constitution as opening the highest and most influential positions to men of all classes, is not altogether unfounded.

Edmund Burke was born in a house on Arran Quay, Dublin, January 1st (o.s.), 1730. He was the younger son of a respectable Protestant attorney, Richard Burke or Bourke, and of his wife, a Miss Nagle. In his early years he suffered greatly from the ills that attend a delicate constitution; so that when his brothers were engaged in the athletic games and exercises of boyhood, he might be seen reclining on a sofa, and reading diligently. His elder brother, Richard, himself a man of parts, when found in later life in a deep reverie after one of Edmund's magnificent orations in the House of Commons, excused himself by saying:—"I have been wondering how Ned has contrived to monopolise all the talents of the family; but now I remember, when we were at play he was always at work." It is consolatory to some of us to reflect that delicate health in childhood is not always a bar to success in after life; and, indeed, quite a volume might be filled with the names of men whose power to serve their country (or themselves) has arisen from the patient industry compelled, or rendered possible, by early "invalidism."

This consideration, however, did not occur to his parents; and young Burke, that he might enjoy the benefit of country air, was sent to his uncle's house at Castletown Roché.* There he received the rudiments of education at the hands of the village-schoolmaster. Afterwards we find him at the "classical academy" of Ballitore (1741-1743), where he was conspicuous for his steadfast application, his retentive memory, and quick

* The neighbourhood is classic ground. There Spenser wrote part of his 'Faery Queen,' and was visited by Essex and Raleigh.

apprehension. In his leisure hours he devoted himself with special ardour to the study of history and poetry; and something of that imaginative colouring which lent such a richness to his eloquence in after life may have been due to his frequent perusal of the old romances of chivalry, the "Palmerin of England," and "Don Belianis of Greece." * Of these he held as high an opinion as Sir Thomas Malory himself: "For herein may be seen noble chyvalrye, courtesye, humanyte, friendlynnesse, hardynesse, love, frendshyp, cowardyse, murdre, hate, vertue, and synne. Al is wryten for our doctryne, and for to beware that we falle not to vyce or synne, but to exercise and folowe vertue." It is not necessary for an orator to be a poet, or for a poet to be an orator; but we suppose that a great poet will have the oratorical instinct as Homer and Milton and Shakespere had, and that a great orator must possess a certain measure of the poetic insight, as was the case with Demosthenes and Cicero, with Chatham and with Burke. † Of the last-named it is recorded that during his school-days he made several attempts in verse; beginning a play on the story of King Alfred, and translating the idyll of Theocritus on the death of Adonis.

At school, it is said, and the suggestion has much probability, he acquired those tolerant sentiments, and that enthusiasm for civil and religious freedom which

* The "Statelye Historye of the famous and fortunate Palmerin of England" comes to us from the Spanish of Luis Hurtado through the French. "Don Belianis of Greece" is a translation from the Italian.

† This is true also in our own day of Gladstone, Bright, and Lord Beaconsfield; the last of whom, however, is rather an effective debater than a great orator.

animated him throughout his career. In one of his speeches in the House of Commons, he remarked, that he had been educated as a Protestant of the Church of England by a Dissenter who was an honour to his sect [the Society of Friends], though that sect was considered one of the purest. Under his eye he had read the Bible, morning, noon, and night, and had ever since been the happier and better man for such reading. He had afterwards turned his attention to the perusal of all the theological publications on all sides, that were written with such wonderful ability in the last and present century; but finding at length that these studies tended to confound and bewilder rather than to enlighten, he had dropped them, embracing and holding fast a firm faith in the Church of England. But towards Protestant Nonconformists, as towards Romanists, he cherished the most equitable feelings, and consistently protested against any limitation of the rights of conscience.

In April, 1743, Burke entered Trinity College, Dublin, as a pensioner.* He took his degree as B.A. in 1748 and as M.A. in 1751. As a student his partialities inclined him to devote his time and energies to classics, history, metaphysics, and general literature. He had the good sense to be fond of a well-written novel, preferring Smollett and Fielding to Richardson, as might have been expected of so keen a critic. Le Sage he read with pleasure, as well as Addison, and Shakespeare. In a letter to a friend written at this time, he expresses a very strong admiration of Plutarch. Among orators, Demosthenes was his favourite; among the Greek dramatists, Sopho-

* Among his fellow collegians was Oliver Goldsmith.

cles. He had a higher opinion of the Greek historians generally than of the Latin ; though surely Tacitus is superior in all the best qualities of an historian to even Thucydides? Like most cultured Englishmen, he was exceedingly partial to Lucretius, Virgil, and Horace. That he maintained the superiority of the *Æneid* to the *Iliad* many scholars will regard as flat blasphemy ; but he partly rectified his criticism by allowing that the elder excelled the younger poet in sublimity, force, and invention. If a man be known by the company he keeps, it is still more true that his bent of genius and character is shown by the books he reads ; and therefore Burke's literary partialities become a matter of interest to his biographer.

Nor will it be uninteresting to the reader if we transcribe a specimen of his powers as a versifier and a translator. While at Trinity College he rendered into English "heroic verse" the latter portion of Virgil's second Georgic. We cannot, with one of his biographers, pronounce it equal to Dryden's, but it is certainly smooth and correct :—

“ Oh ! happy swains ! did they know how to prize
The many blessings rural life supplies ;
Where in safe huts from clattering arms afar,
The pomp of cities and the din of war,
Indulgent Earth, to pay his labouring hand,
Pours in his arms the blessings of the land.
Calm through the valley flows along his life,
He knows no danger, as he knows no strife.
What ! though no marble portals, rooms of state,
Vomit the cringing torrent from his gate,
Though no proud purple hang his stately halls,
Nor lives the breathing brass along his walls,

Though the sheep clothe him without colours' aid,
Nor seeks he foreign luxury from trade;
Yet peace and honesty adorn his days
With rural riches and a life of ease."

Burke's earliest published effort, however, was of a political character. In 1749, just before quitting Trinity College, he attacked the patriotic pretensions of Henry Brooke, the author of the tragedy of '*Gustavus Vasa*,'* then very popular on account of its denunciation of Sir Robert Walpole. Being designed for the legal profession, he soon afterwards repaired to London, to keep his terms in the Middle Temple.

The next two or three years he spent in travelling about England for the sake of health; he read much, and made many friends. In 1753, having apparently abandoned all thought of the law as a career, he applied, it is said, for the professorship of logic at Glasgow University, but was unsuccessful. Among London men of letters and London actors, however, the young and brilliant Irishman had already made a name, and Garrick, Macklin, and Murphy the dramatist, were his constant associates. He is believed to have contributed to various periodicals at this time; and it is known that he laboured most assiduously to cultivate his faculties, and was insatiable in the acquisition of all kinds of information.†

* Burke afterwards wrote the novel of '*The Fool of Quality*,' which both Charlotte Brontë and Charles Kingsley valued so highly.

† Mr. Buckle speaks of him as, Bacon alone excepted, "the greatest thinker who has ever devoted himself to the practice of English politics. The studies of this extraordinary man," he adds, "not only covered the whole field of political inquiry, but extended to an immense variety of subjects

His first avowed work, the 'Vindication of Natural Society,' was published in the spring of 1756. It was

which, though apparently unconnected with politics, do in reality bear upon them as important adjuncts; since, to a philosophic mind, every branch of knowledge lights up even those that seem most remote from it. . . . Thus it is, that while his insight into the philosophy of jurisprudence had gained the applause of lawyers, his acquaintance with the whole range and theory of the fine arts has won the admiration of artists; a striking combination of two pursuits, often, though erroneously, held to be incompatible with each other. . . . All was so digested and worked into his mind, that it was ready on every occasion; not, like the knowledge of ordinary politicians, broken and wasted in fragments, but blended into a complete whole, fused by a genius that gave life even to the dullest pursuits. This, indeed, was the characteristic of Burke, that in his hands nothing was barren. Such was the strength and exuberance of his intellect, that it bore fruit in all directions, and could confer dignity upon the meanest subjects, by showing their connection with general principles and the part they have to play in the great scheme of human affairs."—'History of Civilization,' i. 413–416. Robert Hall (*Works*, p. 190) says:—"The excursions of his genius are immense. His imperial fancy has laid all nature under tribute, and has collected riches from every source of the creation, and every walk of art." Sir T. Erskine May (*Const. Hist.* i. 492):—"In genius, learning, and accomplishments, Mr. Burke had no equal either among the statesmen or writers of his time. His speeches like his writings, bear witness to his deep philosophy, his inexhaustible stores of knowledge, and redundant imagination. They are more studied, and more often quoted than the speeches of any other statesman. His metaphors and aphorisms are as familiar to our ears as those of Lord Bacon." Fox (*Parl. Hist.* xxviii. 363), on one occasion, asserted "that if he were to put all the political information which he had learnt from books, all which he had gained from science, and all which any knowledge of the world and its affairs had taught him, into one scale, and the improvement which he had derived from Burke's instruction and conversation were placed in the other, he should be at a loss to decide to which to give the preference." Wilberforce says (*Life*, p. 57):—"He was a great man. . . . He had come late into Parliament, and had had time to lay in vast stores of knowledge. The field from which he drew his illustrations was magnificent. Like the fabled object of the fairy's favours, whenever he opened his mouth, pearls and diamonds dropped from him." Lord

original in conception and execution ; but the idea has since found many imitators. The style is a close and felicitous imitation of Bolingbroke's ; and the object of the book is to expose the futility of Bolingbroke's infidel theories by pushing them to their extreme but natural consequences. The imitation was so well done that at first it deceived both Chesterfield and Bishop Warburton ; and, indeed, the imitation is carried, not only into the structure of the language, but into the train of thought, and the method of argument. It is interesting to reflect that not a few of the speculations in which Burke indulges as a satirical comment on the dazzling but unsound hypotheses of Bolingbroke, were afterwards seriously adopted by that school of pseudo-philosophers which the intellectual unrest and ferment of the French Revolution called into brief existence.

A few months later appeared the celebrated 'Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful.' Its popularity was immediate. It was read in every "polite circle," and discussed by every literary club. Men of mark sought the acquaint-

Campbell ('Lives of the Chief Justices,' ii. 443) remarks :—"Burke, a philosophical statesman [was] deeply imbued with the scientific principles of jurisprudence." Professor Smyth ('Lectures on Modern History,' ii. 400) refers to him as "the patriot of the British senate," and speaks of his "splendour of wisdom and of eloquence." Sir Joshua Reynolds ('Annual Register,' for 1798, p. 329) deemed Burke the best judge of pictures he ever knew ; and Winstanly, the Camden Professor of Ancient History (Prior, 'Life of Burke,' p. 427) records, that "it would have been exceedingly difficult to have met with a person who knew more of the philosophy, the history, the filiation of language, or of the principles of etymological deduction, than Mr. Burke."

ance of its author, who, on his list of friends, was soon able to read such names as Hume, Lord Lyttelton, Soame Jenyns, the author of the 'Origin of Evil,' Bishop Warburton, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Dr. Johnson. The author of 'Rasselas' seems to have loved Burke next to Topham Beauclerk. He spoke of him at one time as the only man whose common conversation corresponded with the general fame he had in the world. At another time he would assert that no man of sense could meet Mr. Burke by accident, under a gateway, without being convinced that he was the first man in England. And he was one of the earliest to acknowledge the merits of the 'Philosophical Inquiry,' pronouncing it a model of true and refined criticism. Posterity, however, has not endorsed this high eulogium. On the contrary, it holds that many of the rules laid down are erroneous, and that many of the illustrations brought forward are inappropriate. Exception may be taken at the very outset to Burke's definitions of beauty and sublimity; which are neither very accurate nor very precise. Nor are we satisfied with his analysis of their effects upon the mind. Then, again, the style is curiously cold and bare, and the most attractive lines of thought are treated with the dryness which previously had been supposed peculiar to a theologian's statement of dogmatic difficulties. Macaulay remarks that it is the most unadorned of all Burke's works; and this, though written at a period of life when authors are generally prone to luxuriance of language. He writes on the emotions produced by mountains, forests, and cascades; by the glorious masterpieces of art, and the face and bosom of Beauty,

with an aridity which chills and dissatisfies the reader. But from all points of view, a page of Ruskin's 'Modern Painters' is worth the whole of Burke's once celebrated Essay.

Continued ill-health compelled Burke to place himself under the care of Dr. Nugent, of Bath, a man not less eminent as a scholar than as a physician. Under his roof he made the acquaintance of his daughter; the intimacy soon ripened into an affectionate attachment. Burke offered his hand, and was accepted. The union secured his domestic happiness; for Mrs. Burke was in all respects that 'perfect wife' whom Tennyson has described in 'Isabel,' and those who knew her agreed that her husband's fond portrait of her charms did not err from exaggeration.*

* It is allowable to suppose that Tennyson, when he wrote 'Isabel,' had in his mind Edmund Burke's celebrated 'Character.' Here are a few similarities. Burke writes:—"She discovers the right and wrong of things not by reasoning, but by sagacity." Tennyson:—

"The intuitive decision of a bright
And thorough-edged intellect to part
Error from crime."

Burke:—"She never disgraces her good nature by severe reflections on anybody, so she never degrades her judgment by immoderate or ill-placed praises." Tennyson:—

"A hate of gossip parlance."

Burke:—"Her voice is a low, soft music, not formed to rule in public assemblies, but to charm those who can distinguish a company from a crowd." Tennyson:—

"An accent very low
In blandishment."

Burke:—"Her eyes have a mild light, but they awe you when she

Though Burke had gained the ear of the reading public, and the respect of literary society, he had still to struggle hard to make a position. He continued to exercise his pen with laborious perseverance, writing for Dodsley the *Annual Register*,* in which it is difficult to say whether his sketches of contemporary history or his dispassionate judgments of public men deserve the greater praise. He also compiled an 'Account of the European Settlements in America,' and began an 'Abridgment of English History.'† As an historian, however, he would hardly have risen into the first rank. His genius and his inclination alike pointed to a political career; and he waited eagerly for an opportunity of appearing on that stage where he felt he could best command the attention of the audience. To every man, sooner or later, comes his opportunity. Burke's came in 1759, and was not misused. His friend, the Earl of Charlemont, an Irish nobleman of the most enlightened patriotism, introduced him to Gerard Hamilton, better known as Single-speech Hamilton, in allusion to a remarkable oration with which he had electrified the House of Commons, afterwards becoming as silent as an extinct

pleases; they command like a good man out of office, not by authority, but by virtue." Tennyson:—

"Eyes not down-dropt nor over-bright, but fed
With the clear-painted flowers of chastity,
Clear, without heat, undying, tended by
Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane
Of her still spirit."

* At first Burke received for the Register £100 per annum.

† Eight sheets of this work were printed for Dodsley in 1757, and it was then discontinued. It shows strong traces of Burke's study of Montesquieu.

volcano *. Hamilton quickly detected Burke's remarkable powers; and having been appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, invited him to accompany him partly as a friend, and partly as a private secretary. His services in both capacities were so highly esteemed that in March, 1763, he was rewarded with a pension of £300 per annum on the Irish Establishment. But within a twelvemonth this payment was made by Hamilton the excuse for claims which Burke could not recognise, and for conduct which he warmly resented. Immediately he broke off his connection with his patron, and relinquished his pension. "The occasion of our difference," he wrote to a friend, "was not any act whatsoever on my part; it was entirely on his, by a voluntary but most insolent and intolerable demand, amounting to no less than a claim of servitude during the whole course of my life, without leaving me at any time a power either of getting forward with honour, or of retiring with tranquillity." Burke took leave of Hamilton † in an eloquent farewell letter, which, many years afterwards, Hamilton candidly confessed was one of the finest compositions he had ever read. The definite cause of the

* He made several remarkable speeches, however, in the Irish Parliament.

† "Hamilton's character is a problem to this hour. A single effort of eloquence had placed him among the hopes of the British Senate. He never repeated it. Its reputation, and the friendship of Lord Halifax, then President of the Board of Trade, made him a member of the Board in 1756. But Hamilton still continued silent. In four years after he was made Secretary for Ireland, on the appointment of his noble friend as Lord Lieutenant. In the Irish House, the necessities of his situation as Prime Minister of the Viceroyalty, overcame his nervousness, and he spoke, on several occasions, with effect. But on his return to the English

rupture between patron and *protégé* has never been ascertained ; but it is known that Burke to the last conceived he had been unjustly and even insolently treated.

Returning to England in 1764, Burke renewed his friendly intercourse with men of letters. In conjunction with Reynolds, he founded, in May, the Literary Club, in imitation of that famous gathering at "the Mermaid," which had witnessed the wit-combats of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, and that other *coterie* at Will's Coffee-house, where Pope knelt at the feet of Dryden. Of this new club Oliver Goldsmith was a member. Burke's experience of public life, brief as it was, had disinclined him for the pastoral career in the wilds of America, which he had sometimes dreamed of in former days of despondency. And it was, no doubt, with a feeling that he had in him the power to serve his country, and make a name, that he accepted the post of private secretary to the Marquis of Rockingham, when that honest but narrow-visioned nobleman was appointed Premier in 1765. "Being in a very private station," said Burke, some nine years later, "far enough from any line of business, and not having the honour of a

Parliament, his powers were again shut up ; and, by a strange pusillanimity, a tenderness of oratorical repute, unworthy of the member of an English public assembly, during the remainder of his life his voice was never heard. Yet, probably, no man led a more anxious and self-condemning life. During this period, public distinction, and distinction peculiarly by eloquence, seems to have never left his thought . . . Literary history has seldom afforded an example of self-opinion so completely its own punisher ; his extravagant sense of the merit of a single effort, strangled every effort to come ; he was stifled in his own fame ; his vanity was suicidal."—DR. CAOLY, 'Memoir of Burke,' i. 83.

seat in this House, it was my fortune, unknowing and unknown to the then ministry, by the intervention of a common friend, * to become connected with a very noble person, and at the head of the Treasury Department. It was indeed in a situation of little rank and no consequence, suitable to the mediocrity of my talents and pretensions. But a situation near enough to make me to see, as well as others, what was going on ; and I did see in that noble person such sacred principles, such an enlargement of mind, such clear and sagacious sense, and such unshaken fortitude, as have bound me, as well as others much better than me, by an inviolable attachment to him from that time forward." When the appointment was made, the Duke of Newcastle, on hearing of it, hastened to Rockingham with a warning to be on his guard against the adventurer ; declaring that he was a wild Irishman, a concealed Papist, a Jesuit, a Jacobite, and that his real name was O'Bourke. But a calumny so absurd was easily refuted. Burke was brought into Parliament as member for Wendover, in Buckinghamshire. The times were critical ; for the American colonies, by a series of arbitrary and ill-judged measures, had been brought to the brink of rebellion. It was in reference to American affairs that Burke first addressed that House, which he was afterwards so frequently to astonish and delight with the rich flow of his oratory. He spoke with a fire and freedom which attracted the attention and won the praise of the elder Pitt. "He had himself," he remarked,

* Mr. Fitzherbert, a member of the Literary Club.

“he had himself intended to enter at length into the details, but he had been anticipated with so much ingenuity and eloquence, that there was little left for him to say.” He congratulated Burke on his success, and his friends on the value of the acquisition they had made. Encouraged by such an encomium from such a quarter, Burke spoke several times in the course of the session, and each time showed convincingly that the Whig party had gained in him a very valuable accession. Sir John Hawkins, author of a ‘History of Music,’ now almost forgotten, took occasion at the Club to express his surprise at Burke’s growing reputation. “Sir,” said Johnson, “there is no wonder at all. We, who know Mr. Burke, know that he will be one of the first men in the country.” And writing to Langton (March 9, 1760), Johnson said, “We have the less of Burke’s company since he has been engaged in public business, in which he has gained more reputation than perhaps any man at his first appearance ever gained before. He made two speeches in the House for repealing the Stamp Act, which were publicly commended by Mr. Pitt, and have filled the town with wonder . . . Burke is a great man by nature, and is expected soon to attain civil greatness.”

Feebly supported by its friends, and incessantly assailed by a formidable Opposition, the Rockingham government fell; and in June, 1760, the King invited Pitt to form an administration. The result we have described in a preceding page. Pitt executed his task; and, at the same time, lost much of his free popular influence, by removing to the House of Lords with

the title of Earl of Chatham. Burke, on the dissolution of the Rockingham government, had retired to Ireland, and he did not return until the meeting of Parliament. Chatham then offered him a seat at the Board of Trade, but he appears to have felt himself bound to the ex-Premier, and refused the great Minister's offer. It must be admitted that office could not have improved his position in the House of Commons, where he had become the acknowledged leader of that section of the Opposition known as the Rockingham Whigs. As such, he participated keenly in their ungenerous resentment against Chatham, which had no better justification or authority than his waywardness of conduct induced by the irritation of disease.

In May, 1768, a new Parliament met, and Burke again took his seat as member for Wendover. At the same time, for a sum of about £20,000,* he purchased an agreeable residence and small estate, called Gregories, near Beaconsfield, in Buckinghamshire. Towards the close of the year Lord Chatham resigned, broken down in mind and body; and a coalition Cabinet was formed by the Duke of Grafton with the aid of the Bedford party. It was this coalition which plunged the House into a contest with the country on the question of the Middlesex election. Burke united with George Grenville in resisting the illegal and unconstitutional votes by which Wilkes was expelled, and the choice of the Middlesex electors overruled. But this did not prevent him from replying in a cogently-written pamphlet to

* A portion of this amount was a loan from the Marquis of Rockingham.

Grenville's diatribe, 'On the Present State of the Nation.' Burke's answer was so forcible in reasoning and so eloquent in expression, that it led to his being regarded as the author of the celebrated "Letters of Junius," which had just begun to appear. For ourselves we do not see that either the style of 'Junius,' or the sentiments expressed, can be identified with the style and sentiments of Burke. We are sure he would not have condescended to such personalities; we know he would not have been guilty of such misrepresentations. Into the vexed question of the authorship of these Letters, it is not our province to enter; but it has sometimes occurred to us, that, in all probability, their writer may have been some less distinguished person than is commonly supposed. The evidence which connects them with Sir Philip Francis is by no means without a flaw. However this may be, we have always felt that their celebrity is out of proportion to their real merits; that they are conspicuously deficient in breadth of view, and that their political morality is contemptible; and that, if they had not appeared anonymously, very much less would have been said in their praise. It is the mystery that attracts us now; just as it was their virulence of invective that attracted our forefathers.*

* "Junius excelled in the least worthy part of political warfare. The subject of his satire is generally represented in his letters as the vilest of mankind; yet when the imputations are examined, they turn out for the most part, to be frivolous or absurd . . . When we find Junius treating public questions apart from personality, his views are narrow, and his expressions trite."—MASSEY, 'History of England,' i. 284.

Chatham, after a prolonged seclusion, returned to public life at the beginning of 1770. He found the Duke of Grafton and the Bedfords in office, with Lord North Chancellor of the Exchequer. He found the country convulsed with the persecution of Wilkes, undertaken by the Court and the House of Commons. He found America in revolt against the measures of taxation proposed by the Government. He found the two sections of the Opposition, the Grenville and the Rockingham, at variance with one another; and Grenville writhing under the chastisement inflicted by Burke's eloquent pen. It became his object to reconcile the two sections, and unite them in an overwhelming attack upon the Administration. He declared that the new Ministry should be formed upon Whig principles; and that the Rockinghams and Cavendishes, with the old Whig families, should be its leading members. Such, too, were the sentiments of Earl Temple, who, in an interview with Burke, urged that the past should be forgotten. "We have done each other," he said, "a thousand acts of unkindness; let us make amends by a thousand acts of friendship." At first Rockingham and Burke did not very cordially respond to these overtures; but the course of events was rapidly drawing the *disjecta membra* of the great Whig party together, when the political world was convulsed by the death of Chatham. A new order of things dated from that event; and parties, to a certain extent, underwent a modification of their boundaries.

In the session of 1770, Burke spoke frequently. On the 1st of May he introduced eight resolutions condemn-

ing the plan, or rather the want of plan, on which Ministers had conducted the dispute between the American Colonies and the mother-country. A few days later he supported George Grenville's bill for regulating controverted elections. And he presented a petition to the King from the freeholders of Buckinghamshire, praying that a new Parliament might be summoned. While thus astonishing the House by his intellectual activity, he addressed a larger audience through his famous pamphlet, 'On the Cause of the Present Discontents,' which may justly be described as unequalled for the variety and depth of its political knowledge, and the ornate yet vigorous beauty of its style. It has not inaptly been described as a text-book of Whig principles. Its general tone is that of philosophical moderation; and while the intrigues and secret influences of the Court are strongly reprobated, an equal measure of censure is dealt out to the violent schemes of democratic busy-bodies. A happy defence of party ties is balanced by an ingenious, though certainly a not very successful argument against Parliamentary Reform. Burke once said that he pitched his Whiggism low, that he might not be tempted to swerve from it; and in this justly celebrated Essay, undoubtedly the Whiggism never rises very high. It is that of a practical statesman, not of a philosophical theorist; of a statesman who saw the disorders of the time, and was prepared to remedy them, but was not disposed to meddle with hypothetical diseases. He had not as yet adopted those strong monarchical opinions, which are so unpleasantly conspicuous in some of his later writings.

On the other hand, he is less often betrayed into those extravagant images, and that rank luxuriance of style which fatally characterise them. Thoughts luminous and profound are embodied in language chaste and temperate, and impressed upon the reader by illustration as terse as it is apposite. We could cover pages with specimens, which challenge unrestrained admiration. As, for instance :—

“We have not relegated Religion to obscure municipalities or rustic villages—No ! we will have her to exalt her mitred front in courts and parliaments.”

“A great deal of the furniture of ancient tyranny is worn to rags ; the rest is entirely out of fashion.”

“No lines can be laid down for civil or political wisdom. They are a matter incapable of exact definition.”

“The King is the representative of the people ; so are the Lords ; so are the judges ; they are all trustees for the people, as well as the Commons, because no power is given for the sole sake of the holder ; and although government is certainly an institution of divine authority, yet its forms, and the persons who administer it, all originate from the people.”

“It is no inconsiderable part of wisdom, to know how much of an evil ought to be tolerated ; lest by attempting a degree of purity impracticable in degenerate times and manners, instead of cutting off the subsisting ill-practices, new corruptions might be produced for the concealment and security of the old.”

Burke's pamphlet was answered by Dr. Johnson, from the Tory side, and by Mrs. Macaulay from the Republi-

can ; but while their compositions are forgotten, Burke's is still read and admired. As Lord Brougham says, " it is the best weighed and most deliberately pronounced ; the calmest of all his productions, and the most fully-considered."

In the session of 1770-1771, Burke delivered one of his finest speeches in denunciation of the power then possessed by the Attorney-General of filing *ex-officio* informations, a power which had been used to crush one Almon for publishing the letter of Junius to the King. In this speech occurs a splendid, though too flattering, reference to Junius, which may here be quoted as fairly exemplifying the best qualities of Burke's earlier style * :—

" How comes this Junius to have broke through the cobwebs of the law, and to range uncontrolled, unpunished through the land ? The myrmidons of the Court have been long, and are still, pursuing him in vain. They will not spend their time upon me, or upon you, when the mighty boar of the forest that has broke through all their toils is before them. But what will all their efforts avail ? No sooner has he wounded one, than he strikes down another dead at his feet. For my own part, when I saw his attack upon

* In this speech he assailed with great vigour those persons who argue the excellence of a custom from its long continuance. " We are told," he said, " that the time during which this power [of filing *ex-officio* informations] existed, is the time during which monarchy most flourished. What then ? Can no two things subsist together but as cause and effect ? May not a man have enjoyed better health during the time that he walked with an oaken stick than afterwards, when he changed it for a cane, without supposing, like the Druids, that there are occult virtues in oak, and that the stick and the health were cause and effect ?"—*Parl. Hist.* xvi. 1191.

the King, I own my blood ran cold. I thought he had ventured too far, and that there was an end of his triumphs; not that he had not asserted many bold truths. Yes, sir, there are in that composition many bold truths by which a wise prince might profit. It was the rancour and venom with which I was struck. But while I expected from this daring flight his final ruin and fall, behold him rising still higher and coming down souse upon both Houses of Parliament. Yes, he made you his quarry, and you still bleed from the effects of his talons. You crouched, and still crouch beneath his rage. Nor has he dreaded the terrors of your brow, sir,* for he has attacked even you, and I believe you have no reason to triumph in the encounter. Not content with carrying our royal eagle away in his pounces, and dashing him against a rock, he has laid you prostrate, and King, Lords, and Commons thus become but the sport of his fury. Were he a member of this House, what might not be expected from his knowledge, his firmness, and his integrity. He would be easily known by his contempt of all danger, by his penetration and by his vigour. Nothing would escape his vigilance and activity. Bad ministers could conceal nothing from his sagacity, nor could promises nor threats induce him to conceal anything from the public."

In every political question which engaged the attention of the House or the public, Burke evinced the range of

† A personal allusion of this kind would hardly now be tolerated in the House. The Speaker, Sir Fletcher Norton, had bushy black eyebrows.

his intellectual powers, the warmth of his sympathy with truth and justice, the solidity of his judgment. At this time he was the acknowledged leader of his party, and he had not as yet exhausted the attention of the House by that excessive copiousness which became his besetting sin. The vigour with which he espoused the cause of the American Colonies induced the State of New York to appoint him its agent in 1771. When the House of Commons rashly embarked on an attempt to prohibit the publication of reports of its proceedings, and summoned to attend before its bar the printers of the principal London newspapers, Burke was on the popular side. A member named Onslow, who was foremost in the attack, boasted of the part he had taken as specially appropriate to the descendant of three Speakers. Burke swiftly retorted:—"I have not the advantage of a parliamentary genealogy. I was not born, like the honourable gentleman, with 'Order' running through my veins. But as that gentleman boasts of his father [the renowned Speaker Onslow], his son will never boast of him. The parliamentary line is cut off." In 1772, while supporting a motion to relieve Dissenting Ministers from the necessity of subscribing the Thirty-nine Articles, he opposed the concession of a similar relief to clergymen of the Established Church, who might declare their disagreement with some or all of them. Again, in 1773, we find him advocating a further measure of relief to Protestant Dissenters.* In this speech, which is reprinted in his works, occurs the following well-known passage:—

* Compare Burke's Works, i. 263-271, 538-560.

“ At the same time that I would cut up the very roots of Atheism, I would respect all conscience ; all conscience that is really such, and which perhaps its very tenderness proves to be sincere. I wish to see the Established Church of England great and powerful ; I wish to see her foundations laid low and deep, that she may crush the giant powers of rebellious darkness : I would have her head raised up to that Heaven to which she conducts me. I would have her open wide her hospitable gates by a noble and liberal comprehension, but I would have no breaches in her wall ; I would have her cherish all those who are within, and pity all those who are without ; I would have her a common blessing to the world, an example, if not an instructor, to those who have not the happiness to belong to her ; I would have her give a lesson of peace to mankind, that a vexed and wandering generation might be taught to seek for repose and toleration in the maternal bosom of Christian charity, and not in the harlot lap of infidelity and indifference. Nothing has driven people more into that house of seduction than the mutual hatred of Christian congregations. Long may we enjoy our Church under a learned and edifying Episcopacy.”

In the debates on the affairs of India in the following year he also participated, astonishing his hearers by the vast extent of his information. He took advantage of the recess to pay a visit to France, where Marie Antoinette was dazzling all eyes by her young fresh loveliness. So keen an observer could not but be appalled by the corrupt social condition of the country. What alarmed him

most was the contempt into which religion had fallen; and in the next session of Parliament he did not fail to point out this "conspiracy of Atheism" to the watchful jealousy of governments; and though not fond of calling in the aid of the secular arm to suppress doctrines and opinions, yet if ever it were raised it should be, he said, against those enemies of their kind, who would take from man the noblest prerogative of his nature, that of being a religious animal. "Already, under the systematic attacks of these men, I see many of the props of good government beginning to fail. I see propagated principles which will not leave to religion even a toleration, and make virtue herself less than a name."

The American difficulty was daily becoming more serious, and all true statesmen felt that a conciliatory policy had become the duty and the safety of England. In the session of 1775,* following up his action in the previous year, Burke introduced thirteen resolutions for this purpose, founding them on a bill which had been drawn up by the Earl of Chatham a few weeks before. The House, sharing the excited feelings of the country, and blind to the perils of the course on which it had entered, refused to consider them seriously. They afforded an opportunity, however, for one of Burke's ablest oratorical performances, which, as Massey remarks, will enable future ages to appreciate the genius of its author, when the fame of his great contemporaries rests only on tradition. "My proposition," he said,

* Burke sat in this parliament as member for Bristol, which had returned him free of expense.

"is peace. Not peace through the medium of war. Not peace to be hunted through the labyrinth of intricate and endless negotiations. Not peace to arise out of universal discord, fomented on principle in all parts of the Empire. Not peace to depend on the judicial determination of perplexing questions; or the precise marking the shadowy boundaries of a complex government. It is simple peace, sought in its natural course, and in its ordinary haunts. It is peace, sought in the spirit of peace." Again, he said :—"I look on force not only as an odious, but as a feeble instrument for preserving a people so numerous, so active, so growing, so spirited as this, in a profitable and subordinate connection with us. First, the use of force alone is but temporary. It may subdue for a moment, but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again. A nation is not governed, which is perpetually to be conquered." He added: "Three thousand miles of ocean lie between you and the Colonies. No contrivance can weaken the effect of this distance in weakening government. Seas roll, and months pass between the order and the execution; and the want of a speedy explanation on a single point, is enough to defeat a whole system. You have indeed winged Ministers of vengeance, who carry your bolts in their talons to the uttermost verge of the sea. But then a power steps in, which limits the arrogance of raging passions and furious elements, and says, 'So far shalt thou go, and no farther!' Who are you that should fret and rage, and bite the chains of nature? Nothing worse happens to you than does to all nations who have extensive empire. From all

these causes a fierce spirit of liberty has grown up. The question is, not whether this spirit deserves praise or blame, but what, in the name of God, shall we do with it. You have before you the object, such as it is, with all its glories, all its imperfections on its head. We are strongly urged to determine something concerning it."

One of the most celebrated passages of this celebrated speech, was the apostrophe to the aged Lord Bathurst, in which the orator reviewed the progress of the Colonies:—

"We stand," said Burke, "where we have an immense view of what is, and what is past. Clouds, indeed, and darkness, rest upon the future. Let us, however, before we descend from this noble eminence, reflect that this growth of our national prosperity has happened within the short period of the life of man. It has happened within sixty-eight years. There are those alive whose memory might touch the two extremities. For instance, my Lord Bathurst might remember all the stages of the progress. He was, in 1704, of an age at least to be made to comprehend such things. He was then old enough *acta parentum jam legere, et quæ sit cognoscere virtus*. Suppose, sir, that the angel of this auspicious youth, foreseeing the many virtues which made him one of the most fortunate men of his age, had opened to him in a vision that, when in the fourth generation, the third prince of the House of Brunswick had sat twelve years on the throne of that nation, which (by the happy issue of moderate and healing counsels) was to be made Great Britain, he should see his son Lord Chancellor

of England, turn back the current of hereditary dignity to its fountain, and raise him to an higher rank of peerage, whilst he enriched the family with a new one. If amidst these bright and happy scenes of honour and prosperity, that angel should have drawn up the curtain, and unfolded the rising glories of his country, and whilst he was gazing with grandeur on the then commercial grandeur of England, the genius should point out to him a little speck, scarce visible in the mass of the national interest, a small seminal principle rather than a formed body, and should tell him, 'Young man, there is America, which at this day serves for little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men and uncouth manners; yet shall, before you taste of death, show itself equal to the whole of that commerce which now attracts the envy of the world. Whatever England has been growing to by a progressive increase of improvement brought in by varieties of people, by succession of civilizing conquests and civilizing settlements, in a series of seventeen hundred years, you shall see as much added to her by America in the course of a single life!' If the state of his country had thus been foretold to him, would it not require all the sanguine credulity of youth, and all the fervid glow of enthusiasm, to make him believe it?" *

In another speech on the American question, discussing the alleged right of taxation, which the Ministerial

* In Mrs. Piozzi's 'Anecdotes,' will be found Dr. Johnson's amusing burlesque of this memorable passage.

orators described as inherent in the parent state, he said :—" I do not examine whether the giving away a man's money be a power excepted and reserved out of the general trust of Government ; and how far all forms of policy are entitled to an exercise of that right by the charter of nature. Or whether, on the contrary, a right of taxation is necessarily involved in the general principle of legislation, and inseparable from the ordinary supreme power. These are deep questions where great names militate against each other ; where reason is perplexed ; and an appeal to authorities only thickens the confusion. For high and reverend authorities lift up their heads on both sides, and there is no sure footing in the middle. This point is,

' the great Serbonian bog,
'Twixt Damietta and Mount Casius old,
Where armies whole have sunk.'

I do not intend to be overwhelmed in that bog, though in such respectable company. The question with me is not whether you have a right to render your people miserable, but whether it is not your interest to make them happy. It is not what a lawyer tells me I *may* do, but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I *ought* to do. Is a politic act the worse for being a generous one ? Is no concession proper but that which is made from your want of right to keep what you grant ? Or does it lessen the grace and dignity of relaxing in the exercise of an odious claim, because you have your evidence-room full of titles, and your magazines stuffed with arms to enforce them ?

"What signify all these titles and all these arms ?

Of what avail are they, when the reason of the thing tells me that the assertion of my title is the loss of my suit; and that I could do nothing but wound myself by the use of my own weapons? Such is steadfastly my opinion of the absolute necessity of keeping up the concord of this empire by a union of spirit, though in a diversity of operations, that if I were sure the colonists had, at their leaving this country, sealed a regular compact of servitude; that they had solemnly abjured all the rights of citizens; that they had made a vow to renounce all ideas of liberty for them and their posterity to all generations, yet I should hold myself obliged to conform to the temper I found universally prevalent in my own day, and to govern two millions of men impatient of servitude on the principles of freedom. I am not determining a point of law; I am restoring tranquillity, and the general character and situation of a people must determine what sort of government is fitted for them."

In spite of Burke's eloquence, Lord North's government persevered in its attempt to crush the rebellion of the Colonists, until France and Spain leagued with America to bring England to her knees. The mother-country encountered the coalition with undaunted courage, and the lustre of her arms was retrieved by General Elliott's heroic defence of Gibraltar (1779-1782). Her disasters in the West, accordingly were almost balanced by her triumphs in the East, where the bold and unhesitating genius of Warren Hastings was laying the foundation of our Indian Empire. "Almost balanced," we say, for the scale was weighed against

us by the surrender of Lord Cornwallis's army at York Town to the American forces under Washington (1781). This was followed by the capture of several of our West-Indian possessions by the French. Only the naval victories of Rodney saved England from a humiliating peace. But, bleeding at every pore, and exhausted, if not dispirited, she was compelled, in November, 1782, to sign the Treaties of Paris and Versailles, by which the Independence of America was formally recognized.*

Meanwhile, Burke's parliamentary activity had known no cessation. In February, 1780, he had increased his influence, and added to his popularity by a speech in

* "Burke must often have thought deeply of the destinies of the kindred nation with whose independence his own efforts will ever be so indissolubly associated. But all his reflections upon the future of America, notwithstanding his conviction that her independence was the necessary price of the maintenance of free government in England, must have been tinged with bitterness. Great as America might become, and as he honestly wished her to become, her greatness would bring no renown or laud to the mother-country, or its incomparable Constitution. Though above the narrow vies incident to patriotism in weaker and less loftily moral souls, it could not have been more grievous to him to look back upon the circumstances under which England and her sons parted company, than it was mortifying to look forward to a glory for America, which, if statesmen had been prescient and nations just, might have been added to the abundant glories of England. Burke, we may be sure, had none of that speculative fortitude which enabled Adam Smith to anticipate with composure the possible removal of the seat of empire to that part of the empire which in a century (from 1776) would probably contribute most to the general defence. He was intellectually capable of foreseeing much which he was not morally capable of allowing himself fully to realise, and certainly not of constraining himself to dwell upon."—JOHN MORLEY, *'Edmund Burke: a Historical Study,'* pp. 162, 163.

support of economy and retrenchment, which seems to us inspired throughout with the truest political sagacity. He declared his object to be "the reduction of that corrupt influence, which is itself the perennial spring of all prodigality and all disorder; which loads us more than millions of debt; which takes away vigour from our arms, wisdom from our councils, and every shadow of authority and credit from the most venerable parts of our constitution."—*Parl. Hist.* xxxi. 2. His liberal advocacy of toleration for Roman Catholics, and of measures for removing the jealous restrictions imposed upon Irish commerce, weakened his hold upon the free electors of Bristol, and after the dissolution of 1780 he returned to his former love, the borough of Malton, which he continued to represent during the rest of his political career.

In 1782, the Marquis of Rockingham was called upon, for the second time, to form an administration, on the resignation of Lord North (March the 20th.) When the temper of the House of Commons and the country convinced the King that this step could be no longer delayed, he endeavoured, through Thurlow, the Lord Chancellor, to make terms with the leader of the Opposition, and to preserve, if possible, that uncontrolled power which had brought the Empire to the brink of destruction. But Rockingham replied that there must be a change of measures as well as of men; and that the measures of which he should require the King's acceptance, would be those he and his friends had advocated in Opposition. The King was to assent to the recognition of American Independence. He was to understand

that Peace and Retrenchment were the main principles of Rockingham's policy; and, therefore, the following bills would be taken up by the whole strength of his Cabinet,—one for excluding contractors from the House of Commons, one for disqualifying revenue officers from voting at elections, and one, a great scheme of economy put forward by Burke.* The King, after some wild talk about abdication, sent for the Earl of Shelburne, the leader of the Chatham Whigs, and afterwards for Earl Gower, the leader of the Bedford section, but finding each to be resolute in his adhesion to the union of the party, was forced to accept Rockingham on his own terms. Charles James Fox became leader of the Commons, with the seals of Foreign Secretary of State. Dunning, created Lord Ashburton, was made Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The Chancellorship of the Exchequer was given to Lord John Cavendish. Shelburne took the seals of the Secretaryship of State for Home, Irish, and Colonial Affairs. Burke, obtained the Paymastership of the Forces, but without being admitted to the Cabinet.

It cannot be denied that Burke had grave faults. He was impetuous, apt to allow a prejudice to obtain the mastery of him, rash in his conclusions, and governed too easily by an excitable imagination. These

* He presented it to the legislature in February, 1780, as a "Plan for the Better Security of the Independence of Parliament, and the Economical reformation of the Civil and other Establishments." The former objects would be promoted by abolishing the sinecure places and pensions in the gift of the Minister. Among the reforms which he contemplated were the trenchant reduction of the royal household, and the cheaper administration of the Crown estates.

would have unfitted him for such a post as that of first minister, but they were just the faults which the responsibility of a Cabinet office would have corrected. And his claims to such promotion were indisputable. As an orator he was inferior to Fox in parliamentary tact, in debating power, in persuasiveness; but greatly his superior in the higher qualities of the highest eloquence. As a philosophic statesman, he surpassed all his contemporaries. He was emphatically a man of ideas; and his ideas were always instinct with breadth, light, and liberality. The question of religious liberty, the question of freedom of commerce,* the question of the rights of the subject he had made his own; and no one had advocated more zealously or more sagaciously a wise economy in every department of administration. And when it is also remembered that he had long been the friend and adviser of Rockingham, the leader of the Opposition, and that he had taken part in public affairs for seventeen years, the wonder will increase that for such a man Lord Rockingham could find no seat in his Cabinet.†

* He wrote to Burgh (*Works*, ii. 409):—"That to which I attached myself the most particularly, was to fix the principle of a free trade in all the ports of these islands, as founded in justice, and beneficial to the whole; but principally to this, the seat of the supreme power."

† Mr. Buckle remarks that it is no faint characteristic of the times, that a man like Burke should, during thirty years of service, have received from his prince neither favour nor reward. "But George the 3rd was a King whose delight it was to raise the humble and exalt the meek. His reign, indeed, was the golden age of successful mediocrity; an age in which little men were favoured, and great men were depressed; when Addington was cherished as a statesman, and Beattie pensioned as a philosopher; and when, in all the walks of public life, the first conditions of promotion were to fawn upon ancient prejudices and support established abuses."—*History of Civilization*, i. 423, 424.

But at no time does Burke's influence in the House or with the country appear to have been commensurate with his genius or his services. He never attracted towards himself any of that personal popularity which surrounded Pitt or Fox, as in our own day it has surrounded Palmerston and Gladstone. He was respected by many, admired by not a few, and his great speeches frequently drew a large and approving audience. We have seen that his legislative proposals were adopted by the Government; and yet his name was never on the lips of the people. We suppose the explanation of the apparent phenomenon is to be found in Burke's defects of taste and in the character of his oratory, which appealed to the cultivated few rather than to the uneducated many. Gradually his style became overloaded with ornament, and disfigured by excessive amplification. Not unfrequently it erred from indelicacy. Lord Brougham, noticing the failure which attended him in the latter part of his parliamentary life, accounts for it by dwelling upon Burke's deficiency in judgment. "He regarded not," he says, "the degree of interest felt by his audience in the topics which deeply occupied himself; and seldom knew when he had said enough on those which affected them as well as him. . . . He was essentially didactic, except when the violence of his invective carried him away, and then he offended the correct taste of the House of Commons. His declamation was addressed to the head, as from the head it proceeded, learned, fanciful, ingenious, but not impassioned. Of him, as a combatant, we may say, what Aristotle said of the old philosophers, when he compared

them to unskilful boxers, who hit round about, and not straightforward, and fight with little effect, though they may by chance sometimes deal a hard blow." His redundancy of statement justifies Goldsmith's couplet in the 'Retaliation': * —

"Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining,"

Of his too frequent coarseness a specimen or two will be sufficient :—"The vital powers, wasted in an unequal struggle, are pushed back upon themselves, and fester to gangrene, to death; and instead of what was but just now the delight of the creation, there will be cast out in the face of the sun a bloated, putrid, noisome carcass, full of stench and poison, an offence, a horror, a lesson to the world." "With six great chopping bastards (*Reports of Secret Committee*), each as lusty as

* The whole passage is exceedingly happy :—

"Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,
We scarcely can praise it, or blame it too much;
Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.
Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat
To persuade Tommy Townshend to lend him a vote;
Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining;
Though equal to all things, for all things unfit,
Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit;
For a patriot too cool; for a drudge disobedient;
And too fond of the *right* to pursue the *expedient*.
In short, 'twas his fate, unemployed, or in place, sir,
To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor."

The poem of 'Retaliation,' though not published until 1774, was written some months earlier.

an infant Hercules, this delicate creature blushes at the sight of her new bridegroom, assumes a virgin delicacy ; or, to use a more fit, as well as a more poetical comparison, the person so squeamish, so timid, so trembling lest the winds of heaven should visit too roughly, is expanded to broad sunshine, exposed like the sow of imperial augury, lying in the mud with all the prodigies of her fertility about her, as evidence of her delicate amour." To depths like these a Chatham would never have descended.

Burke's occupancy of the Paymastership, like Chatham's, was marked by a splendid disinterestedness. Though his private means were scanty, he refused to appropriate one penny of the perquisites. It was marked also by a gradual divergence of view between Fox, who had been his political pupil and favourite, and himself ; the latter sympathizing with the spirit of movement and progress which was astir in the nation, the former clinging steadfastly to the old orthodox Whiggism, if indeed he did not recede to some extent from his earlier positions. The elements which composed the Rockingham Ministry were so discordant that it is impossible they should long have existed in combination ; but when the Premier suddenly died [1782],*

* The publication of the 'Rockingham Correspondence,' has greatly raised the public estimate of one of the most honest of English statesmen. Though not a man of genius, he was gifted with a calm good sense, and a clear judgment, that, added to his integrity of purpose, fully entitled him to a high place in the national councils. Born in 1738, he succeeded to the marquissate in 1751, and so soon acquired repute as a party-leader that he received the garter in 1760. In 1765, he became prime minister, but held office only for a few months. His was the first ministry which

they started asunder at once. Lord Shelburne rose to the head of affairs, to fall, in a few months, before the notorious coalition of Fox and Lord North, which recalled Burke to office.

for many years had the courage and virtue to refrain from bribing members of parliament.—See the Earl of Albemarle's 'Memoir of the Marquis of Rockingham,' etc. He behaved to Burke with splendid generosity, advancing him on different occasions sums which, in all, amounted to about £30,000, and cancelling the bonds which Burke had given in return.—MACKNIGHT, 'Life and Times of Edmund Burke,' ii. 543.

II.

WITH the session of 1784 begins what may be called the Indian stage of Burke's career. That the affairs of India should always have had a strong attraction for Burke is no marvel. His imagination revelled in the pomp and glow of Oriental life; and in the rapid extension of the British rule over a land swayed by the Great Mogul and powerful Rajahs and Nabobs, over millions of dusky Hindus, over a country abounding in gorgeous scenery and rich in a luxuriant vegetation, there was much to captivate his fancy and stimulate his intellect. His generous sympathies, moreover, were powerfully moved by the oppressed condition of the native population; and for years he had been engaged in inquiring into their wrongs with a view to redress them. On the committees of investigation, appointed in 1780 and 1781, he had been a most industrious member. It was natural, therefore, that when Fox in 1784 determined on effecting a réform in the Anglo-Indian government, Burke should be called upon to assist in the preparation of the necessary Bill. Against this measure a torrent of hostile criticism has been directed. Yet its conception was statesmanlike, and did no discredit to Fox or Burke. As Mr. Massey says, "It was no peddling temporising evasion of a great difficulty, but a bold, a comprehensive, and vigorous project." Its main object was to transfer the political government of India from the hands of the East India

Company to a Board of seven Commissioners. The appointment of the seven was vested in the first instance in Parliament, and afterwards in the Crown; they were to hold office for four years, but could be removed on an address from either House of Parliament. The property and commerce of the Company were to be placed under the superintendence of a subordinate Board of eight persons, nominated also, in the first instance, by Parliament, but afterwards to be appointed by the Court of Proprietors. To these provisions it was objected that, as regarded the Seven Commissioners, no link existed between them and the Ministers of the Crown, and that, therefore, Parliament could exercise no real control over them; and that, as regarded the commercial affairs of the Company, no grounds had been shown for the proposed arbitrary and unjust interference with them. Against the Bill a tremendous opposition arose. The mercantile class looked with disgust at a measure that annihilated the greatest commercial body in the kingdom. Corporations were alarmed at a measure that cancelled a solemn charter. The King was displeased at a measure that placed the patronage of India in the hands of the Whigs. The country revolted from a measure that gave a vast and novel power to an unreformed House of Commons, and was introduced by a Coalition Ministry that had rejected Pitt's plan of Parliamentary Reform.*

* The current objections to Burke and Fox's India Bill are very forcibly stated by Mr. Morley: "It handed over the government of India to a Board chosen by the House of Commons—to a branch, in fact, of its own executive, and responsible to the legislature, just as the Admiralty or Ordnance Boards were. Pitt's Bill, on the other hand, left the government in the hands of the Directors, a body with the special knowledge and

In the Commons the opposition was led by William Pitt, who was supported by his cousin, William Grenville, by Harry Flood, an Irish member of ability, and John Scott, afterwards Lord Chancellor Eldon. The Bill was defended by Fox and Burke. The speeches of both were masterly; that of Burke's was one of his grandest and most complete efforts. The driest details were rendered attractive by the charm of his eloquence. His fine imagination seemed to have steeped itself in the Indian atmosphere, and to communicate the warmth and light thus derived to every part of the subject,

special experience required for the right administration of a remote and peculiar dependency, while he set over them a second body with right of inspection and prohibition. There is thus just the difference in principle between these two schemes, that there is between our present system and that which, after the Indian Mutiny, it superseded." But to the first objection it may be answered that the Board was to be chosen by the House of Commons only in the *first* instance; afterwards, the nomination reverted to the Crown. To the second, the reply seems to be, that the dual system entailed upon us the Afghan War and the Sepoy rebellion; and that the Court of Directors became in reality the subordinates of the Board of Control. Mr. Morley continues:—"There are two things to be said against the continuance of power in the hands of the Company. They had shown themselves avaricious and incompetent in the past; and there was no reason to believe that they would cease to rule the country by methods of routine, and with a view to their own interests for the future. Two arguments, on the other side, seem still more urgent, first, the danger of entrusting such a government as India to seven men who knew nothing special about it; next, the danger of removing from over the subject population, the only authority they had been accustomed to obey, and to identify with English superiority."—J. MORLEY, 'Edmund Burke: a Historical Study,' pp. 219-222. Here again, it seems possible to say that no ground is shown for the assumption that the seven Commissioners appointed by the Crown would have had no knowledge of Indian affairs; and next, that the danger of substituting the Crown for the Company experience has shown to be chimerical.

which, wide as it was, was not too wide for the great orator's consummate intellectual grasp. The Bill passed the House of Commons by triumphant majorities; but in the Lords, through an unscrupulous exercise of the King's private influence, it was rejected.* This event was followed in twenty-four hours by the King's commands to North and Fox that they should resign their seals of office. And thus terminated the long struggle between the Crown and the great Whig families, who, as custodians of constitutional principles, had steadily resisted the encroachments of the prerogative,† though not, it must be owned, without occasional exhibitions of incapacity. "Thus, too," as Earl Russell remarks, "was broken and dispersed by its own dissensions, the great confederacy of freedom which, nurtured in the adversity of the American war, had revived the ancient virtues of Whiggism, and made the Senate shine with the lights of patriotism and eloquence." Apparently the triumph was with the Crown; but the Crown had succeeded only because it was supported for the time by public opinion, which therefore became a daily increasing power, as little to be neglected by sovereigns as by cabinets.

The Whigs now went into Opposition, and had ample

* It was thrown out on December 17th, by 95 to 76.

† "The real contest in those days was not between aristocracy and democracy, but between aristocracy and monarchy. The Tories were, at least, as much aristocrats as the Whigs; but they submitted to the dominion of the King. The Whigs sought to maintain a Parliamentary party, independent of the King's personal influence, and to establish its supremacy over the royal will. The great Whig houses may have been an oligarchy, but they fought the battle of the people against the Crown."—SIR G. C. LEWIS, 'British Administrations,' pp. 95, 96.

time to heal their internal dissensions, to mature their principles, and to educate the people, before they were carried back into office by that movement of constitutional progress which culminated in the Reform Act of 1832. William Pitt, then only twenty-four years of age, became First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Secure in the favour of the Crown and the confidence of the country, he held his ground against the Opposition with admirable tenacity; until the addresses which poured in from every quarter, by proving his popularity, gradually broke the force of the majority arrayed against him. Towards the end of 1784, he dissolved Parliament, and the elections conclusively justified the course he had pursued. All the great constituencies returned members pledged to support him. Of the Whig majority which had defeated him in the House, one hundred and sixty members lost their seats; and but for the nomination boroughs, controlled by the great Whig families, the party would have been almost unrepresented.

We come now to one of the most remarkable episodes in Burke's career, his share in the prosecution of Warren Hastings. The "great proconsul," as Macaulay terms him, had returned from India in 1785, at the close of a splendid administration. He had accomplished more than Clive, and he looked for rewards such as Clive had received. He had raised on the foundations laid by Clive the structure of a mighty empire. His rule had been marked by sagacity, courage, and personal moderation. But to carry out his extensive projects he

had needed money ; to satisfy the incessant demands of the Company he had needed money ; and, therefore, on money he had laid his hands whenever and wherever he could. He had obtained a large sum by lending the services of British troops to coerce the Rohillas ; another considerable amount he had wrung from the Begums or Princesses of Oudh ; and yet another from the Rajah of Benares. Moreover, to maintain power he had resorted to the most daring expedients. It was true that he had done nothing which shocked the native mind, and there was evidence enough that he was absolutely beloved by the Hindu population ; * but many of his acts were not justifiable by any rules of Christian morality or English statesmanship.

Early in the session of 1786, Burke came forward with a motion for papers ; and, when these were produced, he announced his intention of proposing an impeachment of the late Governor-General. At first, the procedure was slow. The Government were not inclined to encourage it. Both the King and the Queen were on the side of Hastings, who was also supported by Lord Thurlow, Lord Mansfield, Lord Lansdowne, and other men of influence. Popular feeling, too, was on his side ; his great errors being forgotten in the consideration of his splendid services. But Burke, strenuously assisted by Sir Philip Francis,—Burke, whose zeal was always roused against arbitrary power, whether it was lodged in the hands of an individual or of the mob,—was not

* "He enjoyed among the natives a popularity, such as other governors have, perhaps, better merited, but such as no other governor has been able to attain."—*Macaulay*.

to be baffled. He, at least, was pure in his motives, and inspired by a honest detestation of the cruelties that had disgraced the English name. Whatever the errors and political failures of his later years, he was always consistent in his opposition to the outrages of power upon the weak. He saw how much there was of wrong and oppression in the relations which existed between the English rulers and their Indian subjects. There is a natural tendency in a strong race like the English to exalt and glorify the strong man, though he may have used his strength to the misery of the feeble; and this tendency, as it was displayed in the popularity of Hastings, Burke set himself to repress. And if in his conduct of the case he sometimes overstepped the bounds of moderation, we must admit that the provocation was extreme. The actions which he denounced were not those of a victorious general, and had not had their origin in the heat of warfare. They had been committed from policy, and not from passion or panic. They had been dictated, as Mr. Morley says, not by strategical necessity, but by a colossal cupidity. They had involved the sufferings of millions. What stirred Burke's sympathetic imagination was not the "woes of a sovereign despoiled of gold and silver, of silks and jewels, but the merciless hand that 'tore the cloth from the loom, or wrested the scanty portion of rice and salt from the peasant of Bengal, or wrung from him the very opium in which he forgot his oppressions and his oppressors.' "

In April, Burke brought before the House his charges, twenty-four in number. The first, on the Rohilla war,

was discussed in June. It did not receive the support of the Government, and was rejected by 119 votes against 67. A few days later, Mr. Fox introduced the second, which related to the spoliation of Cheyte Sing, the Rajah of Benares. By this time Pitt seems to have convinced himself that the conduct of Hastings had been indefensible, and, to the surprise of everybody, he declared his intention of voting in favour of Fox's motion. The result was, that it was carried by 119 to 79. In the following year the discussion was resumed. The charge relating to the robbery of the Begums of Oudh was submitted by Sheridan in a speech of extraordinary brilliancy, the fame of which has come down to our own times.* It was carried by 175 votes against 68. In the end, the House, having agreed to twenty articles of accusation, directed Burke to go before the Lords, and impeach Warren Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanours. A committee for managing the impeachment was duly appointed; and on the 13th of February, 1788, the great trial began. Not even that of Strafford, not even that of "the grey discrowned" Charles, has left so strong a mark on English history, so indelible an impression on the public mind. And it must be admitted that all the circumstances attending it were of a character to touch and excite the imagination. The

* In Pitt's opinion, "it surpassed all the eloquence of ancient and modern times, and possessed everything that genius or art could furnish, to agitate and control the human mind." Burke pronounced it "the most astonishing effort of eloquence, argument, and wit united, of which there was any record or tradition." The debate was adjourned, in order that members might not vote while under the influence of Sheridan's oratory.

scene was worthy of the occasion; "that great hall of William Rufus, the hall which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty Kings, the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon and the just absolution of Somers, the hall where the eloquence of Strafford had for a moment awed and united a victorious party inflamed with just resentment, the hall where Charles had confronted the High Court of Justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame." Then the prisoner was a man whom no one could regard without the strongest interest. For fifteen years he had upheld the power of Britain in the remote East, had annexed a vast territory to the empire, had disposed of the destinies of alien races and subject populations, had sent forth armies where he would, had raised and deposed princes. His judges were the peers, civil and spiritual, of England, nearly one hundred and seventy in number, and including the brothers and sons of the King, and the heir apparent to England's old historic throne. His accusers, the Commons of England, represented by five of their greatest orators.* And what an audience to stimulate the highest eloquence! The Queen and the three elder Princesses were present. In the Ambassadors' box had gathered the representatives of the European Powers. Female loveliness softened the austere features of the scene. Art and Literature were not forgotten; and many an eye was directed towards Gibbon the most learned historian, Reynolds the most successful painter, and Parr the greatest scholar of the time.

* Burke, Fox, Sheridan, Windham, and Charles (afterwards Earl) Grey.

The first charge was opened by Burke in a speech which was continued over four days. It was unquestionably a magnificent oration; though much of it was scarcely relevant to the immediate proceedings. After a rapid review of the history of British India down to the period of the administration of Hastings, the orator introduced a discourse on arbitrary power, of which, he asserted, on the authority of the Koran, Tamerlane's Institutes, the Gentoo law, and other formularies, the Eastern peoples had had no experience until it was inflicted on them by the English Governor. On the third day he set forth numerous vague charges of bribery and peculation, and dwelt upon certain atrocities perpetrated by Cheyte Sing, a native lieutenant of Hastings, though it must be confessed he did not show that Hastings had either authorised or condoned them. After summing up the principal articles of accusation, he concluded with a brilliant peroration:—

“Do we want a tribunal? My Lords, no example of antiquity, nothing in the modern world, nothing in the range of human imagination, can supply us with a tribunal like this. Here we see virtually in the mind's eye that sacred majesty of the Crown under whose authority you sit, and whose power you exercise. We see in this invisible authority, what we all feel in reality and life, the beneficent powers and protecting justice of his Majesty. We have here the Heir Apparent to the Crown, such as the fond wishes of the people of England wish an Heir Apparent of the Crown to be. We have here all the branches of the Royal Family in a situation between majesty and subjection, between the

sovereign and the subject, offering a pledge in that situation for the support of the rights of the Crown, and the liberties of the people, both whose extremities they touch. My Lords, we have a great hereditary peerage here. Those who have their own honour, the honour of their ancestors, and of their posterity to guard, and who will justify, as they have always justified, that provision in the constitution by which justice is made a hereditary office. My Lords, we have here a new Nobility, who have risen, exalted by various merits, by great military services, which have extended the fame of this country from the rising to the setting sun. We have those who, by various civil merits and talents, have been exalted to a situation which they well deserve, and in which they will justify the favour of their Sovereign.

“My Lords, you have here also the lights of our religion, you have the Bishops of England, you have that true image of the primitive Church in its ancient form, in its ancient ordinances, purified from the superstitions and the vices which a long succession of ages will bring upon the best institutions . . . My Lords, those are the securities which we have in all the constituent parts of the body of the House. We know them, we reckon upon them, we rest upon them, and commit safely the interests of India and humanity into your hands. Therefore, it is with confidence, that, ordered by the Commons,

“I impeach Warren Hastings, Esquire, of high crimes and misdemeanours.

“I impeach him in the name of the Commons of

Great Britain, in Parliament assembled, whose parliamentary trust he has betrayed.

“I impeach him in the name of all the Commons of Great Britain, whose national character he has dishonoured.

“I impeach him in the name of the people of India, whose laws, rights, and liberties he has subverted, whose properties he has destroyed, whose country he has laid waste and desolate.

“I impeach him in the name, and by virtue, of those eternal laws of justice, which he has violated. I impeach him in the name of human nature itself, which he has cruelly outraged, injured, and oppressed, in both sexes, in every age, rank, situation, and condition.”

Owing to the delays which took place, principally through the King's illness, Burke did not speak again until April, 1789, when he opened the sixth charge, that of bribery and corruption. Postponement after postponement took place, until the public grew thoroughly weary of the trial, and would certainly have broken out into a demonstration against the irregular manner in which it was conducted, but for the very general belief that it was a gigantic pretence. The only person really in earnest was Burke; but Burke had ceased to occupy the commanding position he once had held, and the virulence and violence of his speeches in the debates on the Regency Bill* had provoked a

* The Regency Bill was introduced on the occasion of George the Third's illness towards the close of 1788. It gave the Regency to the

wide-spread feeling of disgust. Still he persevered; bearing all the labour, and all the responsibility, and contending with the various interests which were engaged on the side of Hastings. In June, 1794, the nine years' trial—it lasted almost as long as the siege of Troy—was brought to a close by the general summing up of the charges of the successive managers, Burke's reply, extending over nine days, forming an appropriate finale. Then Law (afterwards Lord Ellenborough), the prisoner's counsel, replied. Eventually Hastings was acquitted by a large majority, who in this did but confirm the acquittal already pronounced by public opinion. As for the chief prosecutor, the highest compliment paid to the force and splendour of his eloquence was paid by Hastings himself, who, speaking of his opening address, said: "For the first half-hour I

Prince of Wales, but under the severe conditions which his conduct and character necessitated. The Whigs, oblivious of their old principles, and anxious to overthrow Pitt, proposed to give the Regency to the Prince without conditions. Burke pursued the Government measure with unmitigated hostility, and with a vehemence and an exaggeration which cannot be defended or excused. He described it as intended to degrade the Prince of Wales, and to outlaw, excommunicate, and attain the whole house of Brunswick. On another occasion, he so far abandoned every restraint of decency and humanity as to speak of the unfortunate monarch as "having been hurled from his throne, and plunged into a condition that drew down upon him the pity of the meanest peasant in his kingdom." A cry was raised throughout the House to take down these words; and Burke, staggered by the storm of indignation, attempted to explain, but the agitation hardly subsided before the close of the debate.—MASSEY, '*History of England during the reign of George the Third*,' iii. 204, 205. The Bill never became law, owing to the King's recovery in February, 1789.

looked up to the Orator in a reverie of wonder, and during that time, I felt myself the most culpable man on earth. But, then, I recurred to my own bosom, and there found a consciousness that consoled me under all I heard and all I suffered." It was well that a man who had rendered unquestionable services to his country should escape the punishment of the law; and it was felt that the object of the impeachment had already been obtained. It had conveyed a warning, that could not be misunderstood, to future rulers of India. It had taught "the great lesson that Asiatics have rights, and that Europeans have obligations; and that the authority of the English legislature is not more entirely a trust for the benefit of this country, than the dominion of the English in India is a trust for the benefit of the inhabitants of India." Macaulay, in a well-known passage, comments on the striking changes which had taken place in the long period between the opening and the close of the great trial. But no change was more melancholy than that which had affected the relations of Burke and his former colleagues. Their friendship was at an end. It had been violently and publicly dissolved, with tears and reproaches and angry outbursts. Fox had gone in one direction, followed by Sheridan and Charles Grey; Burke, in another, followed by Windham.* The causes of this disunion we are now called upon to trace.

* William Windham, born in 1750, died in 1810. He was a member of the famous Literary Club, an accomplished gentleman, and an effective debater. His speeches were full of wise observations and profound remarks, instinct with classical allusion, elevated by philosophic and learned reflection, and vivid with the most polished wit.

III.

It was in July, 1789, that the Bastille of Paris, so long the stronghold and symbol of arbitrary power, was stormed by an infuriated multitude. The event was one which every lover of freedom hailed with delight, and it might have been supposed that in England all adherents to Whig principles would have rejoiced at so signal a blow to the cause of tyranny. There were many, however, who, to use Burke's own language, looked on with astonishment, not knowing whether to blame or applause. "Whenever a separation," he wrote, "is made between liberty and justice, neither is safe." As the French Revolution went on its way, gathering force and fury, like an avalanche, the generous heart of Fox burned with enthusiasm, while the vivid imagination of Burke was filled with alarm. It was in a transport of horror that he denounced the night of the fourth of August, when the privileges of every class were abolished, and the Revolution, instead of remaining a movement towards constitutional liberty, seemed to threaten an attack on all law and order, a revolt against society. His apprehension, quickened by his hatred of uncontrolled power, whether democratic or oligarchical, professed to detect the drift of the current, and to see that it was carrying the nation onwards to an abyss of blood. While even Pitt was extolling

the new constitution, Burke exclaimed, "The French have shown themselves the ablest architects of ruin who have existed in the world. In a short space of time they have pulled to the ground their army, their navy, their commerce, their arts, and their manufactures." But he stood virtually alone. The Tories, perhaps with some reluctance, followed Pitt, who, at this time liberal in his sympathies, was sincere in his praise of the new French Government. The Whigs, with Fox at their head, naturally hailed with satisfaction the apparent conversion of the French to constitutional principles. Circumstances occurred to justify the confidence of both parties. When, in its angry jealousy of an English settlement at Nootka Sound, Spain applied to France for assistance, the revolutionary party opposed and prevented the war on which the King's ministry was bent. Pitt, therefore, enunciated a maxim of policy which at the present day we all of us accept, that the changes of government in France afforded no reason for distrust or interference on the part of Great Britain. It was a maxim which, at one time, Burke might have approved, and enforced by the abundant illustration he had always at command. But now, excitedly imagining in the Revolution the enemy of everything he valued, the enemy of the traditions of the past, the enemy of a mature and well-ordered fabric of social organisation, the enemy of the nice adjustment of ranks and class-distinctions, the enemy of the Church and the old nobility, he cast it aside. He would have no peace with a people who had thrown down the ancient landmarks.

We have seen of late what may be accomplished by the genius and enthusiasm of one man when he has, as he believes, a noble and righteous cause to advocate. But the task which Burke undertook and achieved was infinitely greater and more difficult than Mr. Gladstone's. Burke had no following: he had lost the ear of the House, and he had never had any firm hold upon the nation. In the Commons his eloquence had lost its charm. His speeches were too redundant and protracted; his arguments too profound and philosophical. If his earnestness wearied an audience of many-acred squires and wealthy merchants, his want of discretion and his extravagance of language disgusted them. His rising was the signal for the crowded benches to thin rapidly, and his splendid perorations were generally delivered to an almost empty House. The impeachment of Hastings had provoked from him a series of eloquent outbursts, which, for a while, had retrieved his reputation; but as the trial drew its slow length along, he had once more sunk into the sere and yellow leaf of a statesman's decay. But now the French Revolution came like the sound of a trumpet to rouse his energies. He was filled with a new fervour, a new if mistaken earnestness. He would stand up in defence of all that he revered and loved, of the old order against the new, of conservatism and orthodoxy against wild speculation in politics and religion.

He went down to the House on the 9th of February, 1790, prepared with a solemn protest against the sympathy which Fox, the chief of his party, had expressed for the new revolt against law and authority. His speech

was in his best manner ; entirely free from the vulgarity and rant which had latterly deformed his orations ; noble, pathetic, eloquent, and full of grand ideas. It contained a dignified and not unjust rebuke of Fox's hasty panegyric on the French Guards who had proved false to their colours and their allegiance. It contained a declaration against despotism everywhere ; against the despotism of an absolute monarch ; but more especially against the despotism of a plundering, ferocious, tyrannical democracy—democracy without a single virtue of republicanism to redeem its crimes. Pitt, who followed Burke, warmly expressed his admiration. "Former differences," he said, "could not preclude him expressing his strongest feelings of gratitude and reverence for the speaker of such sentiments ; sentiments which would be received with the greatest esteem by his country, and would hand down his name to posterity with respect and honour." Fox hastened to retract his former ill-advised language, and it was evident that he felt doubtful of the wisdom of the unbounded approbation he had bestowed on the French ideas of Liberty. It was evident also that he shrank from a quarrel with his old friend and colleague, by whom, he said, he had been instructed more than by all other men and books together ; by whom he had been taught to love the constitution ; and from whom he had acquired nearly all his political knowledge, all certainly, which was most essential, and which he most valued. But Sheridan fanned into a flame the smouldering embers of dissatisfaction. Prompted partly by jealousy of Burke, partly by a ready sympathy with extreme opinions, he broke forth into extravagant praise of the French Revo-

lution and of the actors in it ; while he charged Burke with deserting from the camp, with assaulting the principles of freedom itself ; with defending a cruel tyranny ; and with loving to obtrude himself as the libeller of liberty abroad. Burke then rose, and in a tone of lofty indignation remonstrated against language which ought to have been spared, were it only as a sacrifice to the ghost of departed friendship ; though the language itself was not new to him, it was but a repetition of what might be perpetually heard at the reforming clubs and societies with which Sheridan had lately become entangled, and for whose plaudits he had chosen to sacrifice his friends, though he might in time find that the value of such praise was not worth the price at which it was purchased. Henceforward they were separated in politics for ever.

A reconciliation between the Whig chiefs was so important in the interests of the party that a meeting for this purpose was held at the house of the Duke of Portland ; but the difference of feeling and sentiment was so great that no compromise could be effected. Fox adhered to the opinions he had already enunciated ; Windham sided with Burke ; and a schism took place which was not closed up for many years.

Burke did not confine himself to speeches in Parliament. His object was to arouse the country, and he betook himself, therefore, to the pen. With almost incredible industry he produced by the month of October his ' *Reflections on the French Revolution* ; ' a book of wonderful eloquence, vehement in appeal, luxuriant in imagery, often very beautiful and lofty in thought, but

sometimes disfigured by a curious narrowness of view. Many passages of exquisite charm of style are still remembered ; as, for instance :—“The age of chivalry is gone ; that of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded, and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever.” So, too, the fine allusion to Marie Antoinette, “And surely, never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in—glittering like the morning star, full of life and splendour and joy.”

There can be no doubt that through all his speeches and writings on the French Revolution, Burke was influenced by a morbid imagination. He flung himself into the new crusade with an ardour which weakened his judgment. The heat of his passions blinded him to the impressions on his very senses. “He saw not,” remarks Lord Brougham, “what all other men beheld, but what he wished to see, or what his prejudices and fancies suggested ; and having once laid down a dogma, his mind refused to acknowledge the most astounding contradictions that events could offer.” Early in 1790, when she had large armies on foot, he pronounced France extinguished as regarded her external power. Even at the end of 1793 when a second attempt at foreign invasion had resulted in the absolute discomfiture of the invaders, and had aroused her whole people to threaten the liberties of Europe, he still saw in her situation nothing but “complete ruin, without the chance of resurrection ;” was still sanguine enough to believe that when she recovered

her nominal existence by a restoration of the monarchy, it would task all the efforts of her neighbours, by a sturdy guarantee, to keep her on her basis. It is, perhaps, less surprising that he should "confound all persons, as well as things, in his extravagant speculations" than that he should fall into so wild a delusion. "We are little astonished," says Lord Brougham, "at finding him repeatedly class the humane and chivalrous Lafayette with the monster Robespierre; but when we find him pursuing his theory, that all Atheists are Jacobins, so far as to charge Hume with being a heathen, and pressing the converse of the proposition so far as to insinuate that Priestley was an Atheist, we pause incredulous over the sad devastation which a disordered fancy can make in the finest understanding." Two great defects however, at all times, deformed Burke's character as a statesman; a want of moderation, and an incapacity for recognising the practical and expedient.

Mr. Buckle * has collected a number of examples of the violence of language which Burke used at this period towards France and its people. France was "Cannibal Castle," "the republic of assassins," "a hell." Its government consisted of "the dirtiest, lowest, most fraudulent, most knavish of chicaners." Its people were "a gang of robbers," "a desperate gang of plunderers, murderers, tyrants, and atheists," "the prostitute outcasts of mankind," "a nation of murderers." The amiable enthusiast, Lafayette, was "a horrid ruffian." Condorcet, whom Burke as a man of genius might have been expected to appreciate, was "a fanatic, atheist, and furi-

* Buckle, 'History of Civilization,' i. 428, 429.

ous democratic republican," "capable of the lowest, as well as the highest and most determined villanies." To enter into negotiations with France was "exposing our lazar sores at the door of every proud servitor of the French republic, where the court-dogs will not deign to lick them." He openly asserted that our ambassadors must necessarily be corrupted by the atmosphere of Paris. "They may easily return," he says, "as good courtiers as they went; but can they ever return from that degrading residence loyal and faithful subjects; or with any true affection to their master, or true attachment to the constitution, religion, or laws of their country? There is great danger that they who enter smiling into this Tryphonian cave, will come out of it sad and serious conspirators; and such will continue as long as they live." He denounced as a crime the learning of the French language, or travelling in France, and seems to have dreamed of cooping up his countrymen within the borders of their own island. "No young man," he exclaimed, "can go to any part of Europe without taking this place of pestilential contagion in his way; and, whilst the less active part of the community will be debauched by their travel, whilst children are poisoned at their schools, our trade will put the finishing hand to our ruin. No factory will be settled in France that will not become a club of complete French Jacobins. The minds of young men of that description will receive a taint in their religion, their morals, and their politics, which they will in a short time communicate to the whole kingdom." These quotations will show how completely Burke's intellectual balance had been shaken

by the Revolutionary storm. His continual cry was for war; a general war against Jacobins and Jacobinism; a war of conquest, "a war not confined to the vain attempt of raising a barrier to the lawless and savage power of France, but directed to the only rational end it could pursue, namely, the entire destruction of the desperate horde which gave it birth;" * "a *long* war," he wrote, emphatically; † "a religious war," as in his strange delusion he was mad enough to term it. ‡

At first Burke's wild demonstrations were opposed by the First Minister, whose calm intellect disregarded his fanaticism, and whose cool courage did not share his fears. § He assured the French government that England would persevere in the neutrality hitherto scrupulously observed with respect to the internal dissensions of France, and would never depart from it unless forced to do so in self-defence. || Rising above the doubts and apprehensions of many of his own partisans, he boldly gave at this critical time his support to Fox's Libel Act, which consummated the liberty of the press by transferring the decision in libel cases from the judge to the jury; while he initiated the policy of colonial self-government by

* 'Parliamentary History,' xxxi, 427.

† 'Letters on a Regicide Peace,' in Burke's *Works*, ii. 291.

‡ 'Remarks on the Policy of the Allies,' *Works*, i. 600.

§ He said to Burke, "Depend upon it we shall go on as we are till the day of judgment."—PELLEW'S 'Life of Lord Sidmouth,' i. 72.

|| In the spring of 1792, Pitt actually announced the intention of the Government to reduce both the army and the navy. But a change came over his policy as early as May, when he resolved to throw in his lot with the Anti-reform party, and began his system of repression by issuing a Proclamation against the publication and dispersion of seditious writings.

granting a representative constitution to the two Canadas. We have seen that with the great body of the Whigs, Burke fared no better than with the Tories. The final disruption took place on the 4th of May; a day which witnessed the division of the Whig party into two sections; "the one," it was said, "embracing the new doctrines of French democracy; the other adhering to the old English principles of constitutional liberty." But the one, it might rather be asserted, blindly refusing to recognise the results of a great intellectual movement which had been in progress for many years, and the other, easily adapting itself to the new spirit, and endeavouring to guide it into a path of moderation and security. In the course of a debate on that Canadian Bill of Pitt's, to which we have just referred, Burke rose to speak, and as was then his custom, plunged into invectives against the French Revolution. He violently attacked the doctrines enunciated in Thomas Paine's 'Rights of Man,' (the famous reply to his 'Reflections');* and then diverged into a highly coloured description of the insults offered by the Parisian populace to Louis the 16th and the French royal family. Then he was called to order. A scene of great excitement and confusion ensued. Fox, starting from his seat, taunted him with the irrelevancy of his observations. "This, however," he said, "was a day of license, on which any gentleman might get up and abuse any Government he pleased. True it was that the French Revolution had no more to do with the question

* Another reply, but of a very different character, was the 'Vindiciæ Gallicæ,' which first brought Sir James Mackintosh into notice.

before the house than the Government of Turkey or the laws of Confucius ; but what of that ?” Burke, angrily retorting, compared his position with that of Caylus, the great Conservative orator of the French National Assembly, whose speeches were always interrupted by the clamour of the so-called friends of liberty. The cries of “ order ” were repeated, and “ increased in violence ; ” an angry conversation took place between Fox, Pitt, Charles Grey, and others. At length Lord Sheffield moved, and Fox seconded, “ That dissertations on the French constitution, and to read a narrative of the transactions in France, are not regular or orderly on the question, and that the clauses of the Quebec Bill be read a second time.” But in seconding this amendment, Fox was guilty of the very breach of order which he censured in Burke. He proceeded to defend the principles of the French Revolution ; and, arguing that the rights of man were the foundation of any social political system, declared he had learned this doctrine from Burke himself. He charged the great orator with betraying his cause and party, and accused him, in his own language, employed at the time of the American War, of drawing an indictment against a whole people.

Amid breathless silence Burke rose again. For some minutes he spoke in a low tone, evidently seeking to keep down a not unnatural excitement and irritation. He complained of the personal attack that had been made upon him by one of his oldest friends, and then reviewed the political connection which had subsisted between Fox and himself for five-and-twenty years, noticing the few subjects on which they had disagreed,

and rejoicing that that disagreement had not interrupted their private friendship. "It was indiscreet," he said, "at his time of life, or at any period, to provoke enemies or lose friends; but if his steadfast adherence to the British Constitution placed him in such a dilemma, he would risk all, and as public duty and public prudence taught him, with his last breath exclaim, 'Fly from the French Constitution!'" Then in faltering tones, Fox whispered: "There is no loss of friendship!" "I regret to say there is," exclaimed Burke, "I know the value of my line of conduct; I have, indeed, made a great sacrifice; I have done my duty, though I have lost my friends; there is something in the detested French Constitution that envenoms everything it touches." And he concluded with an eloquent apostrophe to the two great rival leaders, steadfastly to guard, whatever their other differences, the British Constitution against innovations and new theories. So great was Fox's emotion when he rose to reply, that, at first, he could not speak for tears. In broken accents, while the House listened with sympathy, he made a touching appeal to his old and revered friend, reminding him of their past friendship, of their reciprocal affections, as dear and almost as binding as the ties of nature between father and son. But Burke remained unshaken, declaring with unmistakable earnestness that he could not maintain a friendly intercourse with a man who upheld anarchy and revolution in their most hideous aspects.*

* Wilberforce writes in his *Diary*, "The quarrel between Burke and Fox, which I had endeavoured to prevent." To Mr. Babington he says:—"I scarce recollect being so much struck at anything, and I have been

That the country had gradually been brought to sympathise with Burke rather than with the Opposition was shown by the large sale of his 'Reflections,' of which thirty thousand copies were issued in a few weeks. He followed it up with an 'Appeal from the Old to the New Whigs.' It is significant of the state of popular feeling that a great change came over the caricatures then so famous in the print shops. Previously Burke had always been represented in a Jesuit's dress. Now he was shown as confounding by his oratorical triumphs the defenders and apologists of the French Revolution, while Fox appeared in every kind of humiliating attitudes and positions. All classes contended to do him honour. The University of Dublin bestowed on him the degree of Doctor of Laws; the graduates of Oxford presented him, through Mr. Windham, with a congratulatory address; the Bishop of Aix, and the expatriated French clergy, poured out their sentiments of gratitude and admiration in the most fervent language. Such was the revival of his influence that he was requested by the Irish Roman Catholics to advocate their claims in Parliament; nor did his exertions wholly fail of success. His activity was incessant; and the interest he took in the great questions of the day is shown by his pamphlet, entitled, 'Heads for Consideration on the Present State of Affairs.'

Still, the great orator felt keenly his separation from the party which his genius had adorned and strengthened; and he waited only until the trial of Hastings was com-

lamenting ever since that I did not myself interfere—a long tried and close worldly connection of five-and-twenty years trampled to pieces in the conflict of a single night."—*Life*, p. 931.

pleted to retire from parliamentary life. Arrangements were made for his son, who promised to be no unworthy inheritor of his name, to succeed him in the representation of Malton. His last appearance in the House was on the 25th of June, 1794, when, with the other managers of the impeachment of Hastings, he received the formal thanks of the Commons. Almost immediately afterwards he accepted the Chiltern Hundreds. His son, whom he tenderly loved, and in whom he reposed the brightest hopes, was duly elected for Malton; and was on the point of starting for Ireland, as secretary to the new viceroy, Lord Fitzwilliam, when he died of a rapid consumption on the 2nd of August. The blow fell with crushing effect on the bereaved father. His friend, Dr. Laurence, the well-known lawyer, writes:—"During the first day, he was at times truly terrible in his grief. He occasionally worked himself up to an agony of affliction, and then, bursting away from all control, would rush to the room where his son lay, and throw himself headlong on the bed or on the floor. Yet, at intervals, he attended, and gave directions relative to every little arrangement, pleasing himself most with thinking what would be most consonant to the living wishes of his son."... "He lamented," he afterwards told Dr. Laurence, "that he went to see his son after death, as the dead countenance had made such an impression on his imagination, that he could not retrace in his memory the features and air of his living Richard." The aged statesman may be said to have been visibly approaching the grave, from the day that the heir of his genius and his ambition was taken away. He never afterwards

entered Beaconsfield church ; could not bear even to turn his eyes towards it. Thenceforth he walked with head bent down, like one oppressed by the burden of his sorrow ; and all who saw him felt, in the expressive language of the old Puritan divine, “ a waft of death come from him.” He was a desolate old man. “ I am alone,” he wrote to a friend ; “ I have none to meet my enemies in the gate ; desolate at home, stripped of my boast, my hope, my consolation, my helper, my counsellor, and my pride.”

He was temporarily roused from his dejection by the attack made upon him by the Duke of Bedford. At the instance of the King, the Government had bestowed upon him a pension of £3700 ; a liberal sum certainly, but not altogether disproportionate to the value of his long services (1795). The clamour which it excited was very great ; and even some of his admirers doubted whether the reward was one which he could consistently accept. In the House of Lords it was denounced in violent terms by the Duke of Bedford, as well as by the Earl of Lauderdale, drawing forth a vigorous reply from Lord Grenville. The provocation roused Burke to the exercise of his full powers, and he published the famous ‘ Letter to a Noble Lord,’ which has always struck us as one of the most powerful satires in the English language. The strength of its indignant eloquence and the force of its brilliant invective will be understood from a few brief quotations :—

“The grants to the house of Russell (by Henry the 8th) were so enormous as not only to outrage economy, but even to stagger credibility. The Duke of Bedford is

the leviathan among all the creatures of the Crown. He tumbles about his unwieldy bulk; he plays and frolics in the ocean of the royal bounty. Huge as he is, and whilst 'he lies floating many a rood,' he is still a creature. His ribs, his fins, his whalebone, his blubber, the very spiracles through which he spouts a torrent of brine against his origin, and covers one all over with the spray—everything of him, and about him, is from the Crown."

He draws a forcible contrast between the services for which the Duke's ancestor was so splendidly rewarded, and those for which he himself had received his pension.

"The first peer of the name, the first purchaser of the grants, was a Mr. Russell, a person of an ancient gentleman's family raised by being a minion of Henry the 8th. As there generally is some resemblance of character to create these relations, the favourite was in all likelihood much such another as his master. The first of these immoderate grants was not taken from the ancient demesne of the Crown, but from the recent confiscation of the ancient nobility of the land. The lion having sucked the blood of his prey, threw the offal carcase to the jackal in waiting. Having tasted once the food of confiscation, the favourites became fierce and ravenous. This worthy favourite's first grant was from the lay nobility. The second, infinitely improving upon the enormity of the first, was from the plunder of the Church. In truth, his Grace is somewhat excusable for his dislike to a grant like mine, not only in its quantity, but in its kind so different from his own.

“ Mine was from a mild and benevolent sovereign ; his from Henry the 8th. . . .

“ The merit of the granter whom he derives from, was that of being a prompt and greedy instrument of a *levelling* tyrant, who oppressed all descriptions of his people, but who fell with particular fury on everything that was *great and noble*.

“ Mine has been, in endeavouring to screen every man, in every class, from oppression, and particularly in defending the high and eminent, who in the bad times of confiscating princes, confiscating chief governors, or confiscating demagogues, are the most exposed to jealousy, avarice, and envy.

“ The merit of the original granter of his Grace’s pensions, was in giving his heart to the work, and partaking the spoil with a prince, who plundered a part of the national church of his time and country.

“ Mine was in defending the whole of the national church of my own time and my own country, and the whole of the national churches of all countries, from the principles and the examples which lead to ecclesiastical pillage, thence to a contempt of *all* prescriptive titles, thence to the pillage of *all* property, and thence to universal desolation.

“ The merit of the origin of his Grace’s fortune was in being a favourite and chief adviser to a prince, who left no liberty to their native country.

“ My endeavour was to obtain liberty for the municipal country in which I was born, and for all descriptions and denominations in it. Mine was to support with unrelaxing vigilance every right, every privilege,

every franchise, in this my adopted, my dearer, and more comprehensive country ; and not only to preserve these rights in this chief seat of empire, but in every nation, in every land, in every climate, language, and religion, in the vast domain that is still under the protection, and the larger that was once under the protection of the British Crown."

In this strenuous strain he continues his comparison ; but it is worth noting that though the 'Letter' is the defence of a man who, in the language of to-day, was "self-made," and had no noble lineage to boast of, its tone is thoroughly aristocratic. There is nowhere any trace of popular sympathies ; and the Duke is attacked, not as the representative of an order, but as an individual.

In a burst of pathos, the writer alludes to the heavy affliction that had darkened his later years :—

"Had it pleased God," he says, "to continue to me the hopes of succession, I should have been, according to my mediocrity, and the mediocrity of the age I live in, a sort of founder of a family. I should have left a son who, in all the points in which personal merit can be viewed, in science, in erudition, in genius, in honour, in humanity, in every liberal sentiment and every liberal accomplishment, would not have shown himself inferior to the Duke of Bedford, or to any of those whom he traces in his line. His Grace very soon would have wanted all plausibility in his attack upon this provision which belonged more to mine than me. He soon would have supplied every deficiency, and symmetrised every disproportion. It would not have been for that successor

to resort to any *stagnant, wasting reservoir of merit in me*, or in any ancestry. He had in himself a salient, living spring of generous and manly action. Every day he lived he would have repurchased the bounty of the Crown, and ten times more. He was made a public creature, and had no enjoyment whatever but in the performance of some duty. At this exigent moment, the loss of a finished man is not easily supplied.

"But, a Disposer, whose power we are little able to resist, and whose wisdom it behoves us not at all to dispute, has ordained it in another manner, and (whatever my querulous weakness might suggest) a far better. The storm has gone over me, and I lie, like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours—I am torn up by the roots, and lie prostrate on the earth. There, and prostrate there, I must unfeignedly recognize the Divine justice. But, while I humble myself before God, I do not know that it is forbidden to repel the attacks of unjust and inconsiderate man. The patience of Job is proverbial; after some of the convulsive struggles of our irritable nature, he submitted himself, and repented in dust and ashes; but even so, I do not find him blamed for reprehending those ill-natured neighbours of his, who visited his dunghill to read moral, political, and economical lectures on his misery."

We have not attempted in these pages to enumerate all the compositions, political and literary, which Burke's copious and active intellect produced. To the last his mental energy was incessant. His mind was so full

that he seems to have been under an absolute necessity of relieving himself of its overflow. In his retirement at Beaconsfield, dejected as he was and feeble,—“I sleep ill at night,” he writes; “and am drowsy, and sleep much in the day,”—his pen was his great resource. He was still keenly alive to the impressions produced by the progress of the revolutionary fever in France, and tremblingly afraid lest English society should catch the infection. When the disasters of the Allied army of invasion, and the successes of the French troops, suggested to the Ministry the prudence of opening negotiation with the French government, his anger knew no bounds, his excitement could not be controlled. His passion animated the Cassandra-like rhetoric of his two memorable ‘*Letters on a Regicide Peace*,’ published in the summer of 1796. In these the least gracious critic can discover no sign of intellectual decay. On the contrary, he will be forced to own that few of Burke’s productions exhibit a greater mastery of language or wealth of allusion, ornament, and illustration; while, with an occasional excess of morbid sentiment, will be found abundant instances of political sagacity and philosophical insight. Of the loftiness of the patriotic spirit that glows in every page we may furnish one or two proofs:—

“The nature of courage is to be conversant with danger; but in the palpable night of their terrors, men under consternation suppose, not that it is the danger which calls out the courage to resist it, but that it is the courage which produces the danger. They therefore seek for a refuge from their fears in the fears themselves,

and consider a temporizing meanness as the only source of safety."

"If wealth is the obedient and laborious slave of public virtue and honour, then wealth is in its place. But if honour is to be sacrificed to the conservation of riches; riches, which have neither eyes nor hands, nor anything truly vital in them, cannot long survive the being of the vivifying powers, their legitimate masters, and their potent protectors. If we command our wealth, we shall be rich—free; if our wealth command us we shall be poor indeed. We are bought by the enemy with the treasure from our own coffers."

"Nature is false, or this is true, that the State which is resolved to hazard its existence rather than abandon its objects, *must* have an infinite advantage over that which is resolved to yield rather than carry its resistance beyond a certain point; that the nation, which bounds its efforts only with its being, *must* give the law to that nation which will not push the opposition beyond its convenience."

"None can aspire to act greatly, but those who are of force greatly to suffer. They who make their arrangements in the first run of misadventures, and in a temper of mind the common guest of disappointment and dismay, set a seal on their calamities. So far as their power goes, they take a security against any favours which they might hope from the usual inconstancy of fortune."

After sketching the noble efforts made by England in the war against France with which the eighteenth century opened, Burke continues:—

"For what have I entered into all this detail? It

has been done to show that the British nation was then a great people ; to point out by what means they came to be exalted above the vulgar level, and to take that lead which they assumed among mankind. To qualify us for that prominence, we have had a high mind and a constancy unconquerable ; we were then inspired with no fleshly passions, but such as were durable, as well as warm ; such as corresponded to the great interest we had at stake. This force of character was inspired, as all such spirit must ever be, from above. Government gave the impulse. As well may we fancy, that of itself, the sea will swell, and that without winds the billows will insult the adverse shore, so that the gross mass of the people will be moved, and elevated, and continue by a steady and permanent direction to bear upon any one point, without the influence of superior authority, or superior mind."

Our last quotation refers to the folly and crime of a war undertaken to benefit trade :—

"Never can a vehement and sustained spirit of fortitude be kindled in a people by a war of calculation. It has nothing that can keep the mind erect under the gusts of adversity. Even where men are willing, as sometimes they are, to barter their blood for lucre, to hazard their safety for the gratification of their avarice ; the passion which animates them to that sort of conflict, like all the other short-sighted passions, must see its objects distinct and at hand. Speculation, plunder ; contingent spoil ; future, long adjourned, contingent booty ; pillage, which must enrich a late posterity, and which possibly may not reach posterity at all ; these, for any

length of time, will not support a mercenary war. The people are in the right. The calculation of profit in all such wars is false. On balancing the account of such wars, ten thousand hogsheads of sugar are purchased at ten thousand times their price. The blood of man should never be shed, but to redeem the blood of man. It is well shed for our family, for our friends, for our God, for our country, for our kind. The rest is vanity, the rest is crime."

Though such was the surprising vigour and vivacity of the aged statesman's mental powers, his bodily health was rapidly declining, and he became too feeble to enjoy his usual amount of exercise. Early in February, 1797, he proceeded to Bath, as Chatham had so often done, to drink the waters; but they could not avail against the decay brought about by a long-continued exertion of the intellect, and by the inroads of a deep affliction. For the greater part of the four months he spent at Bath he was confined to his bed or his couch. "My health," he wrote to a friend, "has gone down very rapidly, and I have been brought hither with very faint hopes of life, and enfeebled to such a degree, as those who had known me some time ago could scarcely think credible. Since I came hither, my sufferings have been greatly aggravated, and my little strength still further reduced; so that though I am told the symptoms of my disorder begin to carry a more favourable aspect, I pass the far longer part of the twenty-four hours, indeed almost the whole, either in my bed or lying upon the couch from which I dictate this." In the letter from which our

extract is taken occurs a reference to Irish politics, which even at the present day, is not without appropriateness:—"I think that Great Britain would be ruined by the separation of Ireland; but as there are degrees even in ruin, it would fall the most heavily on Ireland. By such a separation Ireland would be the most completely undone country in the world; the most wretched, the most distracted, and, in the end, the most desolate part of the habitable globe. Little do many people in Ireland consider how much of its prosperity has been owing to, and still depends upon, its intimate connection with this kingdom."

Sensible that his end was approaching, Burke insisted on being carried back to his residence at Beaconsfield (May 24th.) There he lingered for a few weeks longer, awaiting the last summons with manly composure and Christian fortitude. To the very end his interest in public affairs continued, and his observations upon them were marked by his usual force of thought and clearness of statement. To his old friends he sent touching messages of remembrance; his enemies he freely forgave; but we cannot do otherwise than regret that what he conceived to be a stern duty prevented him from that reconciliation with Fox which the latter desired. His life had been free from those stains of immorality which defiled Sheridan's and even Fox's career, and his faith in the religion of the Cross, never having wavered, was firm and ardent at the close. He declared that he trusted to obtain the Divine mercy through the intercession of the blessed Redeemer, which he had long sought with unfeigned humiliation, to which he looked

with trembling hope. On the day of his departure (July 9th), he was occupied in giving directions relative to his funeral, and in listening to one of Addison's fine essays on the Immortality of the Soul. When the reading was finished, his kinsman, Mr. Nagle, and his attendants, began at his request, for he complained of faintness, to remove him to his bed. But they had scarcely taken him in their arms before his breathing became difficult, and whispering an inarticulate blessing, he expired. "His end," said Dr. Laurence, "was suited to the simple greatness of mind which he displayed through life, every way unaffected, without levity, without ostentation, full of natural grace and dignity."

Fox proposed that his remains should be honoured with a public funeral, and interred in Westminster Abbey; but his own instructions were peremptory, and he was buried in Beaconsfield Church by the side of his brother Richard, and his well-beloved son. The ceremony took place on the 15th; and the pall was borne by Lord Minto, Mr. Addington (then Speaker of the Commons), the Duke of Portland, Lord Fitzwilliam, the Duke of Devonshire, the Marquis of Thomond, Mr. Wyndham, and Lord Loughborough (Lord Chancellor), most of them being members of that old Whig party of which Burke had been the illustrious ornament.*

The foregoing pages have necessarily been occupied with Burke as an orator and a politician. His private

* Burke's house at Beaconsfield, Butler's Court, was unfortunately burnt down in April, 1813.

life was all that was admirable. As a conversationalist he excelled; being always full of information, fluent in speech, ready in reply, ingenious in unfolding an argument, and prompt to relieve a grave discussion by appropriate sallies of vivacity and humour. "Burke," said Dr. Johnson, "is never what we call hum-drum; never in a hurry to begin conversation, at a loss to carry it on, or eager to leave off." Nor did he monopolize conversation, as some great talkers are prone to do; he was able to listen, a necessary and a useful accomplishment. Few of his sayings have been preserved; but some of these lead us to wish that he, too, had had his Boswell. When a certain 'Life of Dr. Young,' the poet, was described as a good imitation of the Johnsonian style, he remarked: "No, no, it is not a good imitation of Dr. Johnson; it has all his pomp without his force; it has all the nodosities of the oak without its strength; it has all the contortions of the Sybil without the inspiration." In reference to Godwin's strange definition of gratitude in his 'Political Justice,' he observed:—"I should take care to spare him the commission of that vice, by never conferring upon him a favour." His opinion of Gay's 'Beggars' Opera,' though much too severe, was epigrammatically expressed:—"There is nothing exhibited in it which a correct man would wish to see, and nothing taught in it which any man would wish to learn." This is not wit, however; and we are disposed to agree with Dr. Johnson, that wit was the one intellectual gift Burke did not possess. Its absence was little likely to be noticed in the conversation of a man so richly endowed with

imagination, and so capable of treating happily every subject that came before him.

Burke was a deeply religious man, not indeed in the sense in which religion is understood by zealots of the Calvinistic school ; but his faith was firm, and his piety cheerful and unaffected. Towards Romanists and Dissenters, he was naturally disposed to be tolerant by the strength of his understanding and the wealth of his culture ; but his attachment to the Church of England was unquestionably sincere. His integrity has never been doubted ; his moral character is as spotless as the shield of a Bayard. The dice and the bottle which misled so many of his contemporaries, had for his lofty nature no attractions. As he himself said, he had no time to be idle ; for the hours not given to public business or social intercourse were devoted to literary labour, relieved, in the country, by agricultural pursuits. His charity was extensive ; no worthy applicant ever made known to him his distress in vain. Not one of the least brilliant features of a brilliant career was his warm and steady patronage of Barry the artist, who was indebted to him for prudent counsel as well as for liberal pecuniary help.

To his versatility of genius we have already alluded. He was not only eloquent as an orator, not only foremost as a statesman, not only an historical scholar of remarkable erudition, not only a successful conversationalist, but an inquiring philosopher and a judicious critic. If his imagination sometimes overpowered his judgment, it must nevertheless be admitted that few men have excelled him in political prescience. He was never super-

ficial; he seldom touched a subject on which he did not pour a flood of fresh light; and astonishing as was the copiousness and luxuriance of his eloquence, still more astonishing was this prodigality of ideas. His writings would furnish the material for a commonplace book of remarkable variety and value. It was, perhaps, this plenitude of thought and suggestion that rendered him as a practical statesman inferior to Pitt and Fox. He could not stoop to study expediency. The rush of his imagination carried him far beyond the goal at which minds more prudent, and less concerned with the future than the present, were content to halt. It was this quality which affected his conduct in regard to the French Revolution. He could not remember the good it had done, and was calculated to do, by releasing Europe from the thralldom of ancient prejudices, and sweeping aside the lingering traditions of feudalism; because his vivid fancy saw in it a destructive movement which would shake the very foundations of society, and involve the civilized world, with all its law and all its religion, in irretrievable ruin. As is not uncommon with men of an imaginative disposition, he was at heart a Conservative. He could not shake off the spell of the past. He looked back with regret to the "age of chivalry." For all established institutions he felt a tender affection, investing them with the brightest associations and the most pleasing memories.

In person,—and we all of us delight to know the personal characteristics of great men,—Burke was five feet ten inches high, erect, well-made, but not robust. In his earlier years he was fond of rural sports; and

until his last illness his activity was considerable. Though inclined to *embonpoint*, he was not corpulent. His features were good, but his countenance was chiefly remarkable for its benevolence of expression. His manners were very charming; happily combining frankness with dignity, and simplicity with ease. The reader may be interested to learn, since one of Burke's biographers thinks it worth recording, that his usual dress was a light brown coat, which seemed to restrict his power of movement, and a little bob-wig with curls.—Such was Edmund Burke.

BOOK IV.

CHARLES JAMES FOX.



A.D. 1749-1806.

[THE authorities for the political life of Fox are to a great extent the same as those for the life of Burke, his political father. The student will, of course, consult such contemporary means of information as the *Rockingham Correspondence*, the *Grenville Papers*, and the *Correspondence of George the 3rd with Lord North*. We must also refer him to Macknight's *Life of Burke*; Morley's *Essay on Burke*; Massey's *History of England during the Reign of George the 3rd*; Brougham's *Statesmen of the Reign of George the 3rd*; Lord Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*; and Lord Russell's *Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox*. See also Twiss's *Life of Lord Eldon*; Wright's *Caricature History of the Georges*; the *Quarterly Review*, vol. iv.; and the Duke of Buckingham's *Courts and Cabinets of George the 3rd*, a book replete with interesting matter.]

Born in London, January 24th, 1749	Fox's India Bill thrown out in the Lords, December, 1783
Educated at Eton, 1763	
At Hertford College, Oxford, 1764	Dismissal of Fox and Lord North, December, 1783
Elected M.P. for Midhurst, 1768	Returned for Westminster, 1784
Joins the Whig Opposition, 1774	Opposes the War with France, 1793-7
Secretary of State in the Rockingham Ministry, 1782	Secedes from Parliament, 1797-9
Resigns on the death of Lord Rockingham, 1782	Secretary of State in the Grenville - Fox Ministry, 1806
Forms a coalition with Lord North, 1783	Death at Chiswick, September 13th, 1806
Foreign Secretary of State in the Coalition Ministry, 1783	

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

A.D. 1749–1806.

I.

THOUGH Mr. Fox was excelled by both Chatham and Burke as an orator, and in grasp of political details by Mr. Pitt, yet it is open to doubt whether either of these great statesmen really equalled him in genius.* His natural powers were immense; and they owed little to cultivation. For while Burke's erudition was wide and deep, Fox knew nothing of metaphysical philosophy, of political economy, or of natural science. On the other hand, his knowledge of the classics was intimate and solid; he was conversant with several modern languages; and he had studied history with assiduity and success. His

* "Fox," says Mr. Buckle, "was one of the greatest statesmen of the eighteenth century, and was better acquainted than any other with the character and resources of those foreign nations with which our own interests were intimately connected. To this rare and important know-

keenness of insight, his quickness of perception, his power of detecting a fallacy or a weak point in an adverse argument, more than compensated for any deficiency in profound and persistent culture. Few debaters have approached him in readiness of reply. He grappled with an antagonist so easily that the swiftness of the victory made the hearer unmindful of the skill and strength by which it was won. His eloquence was remarkable for its spontaneity; and though inferior to Chatham's in loftiness of declamation, and to Burke's in subtlety of imagination, was superior in the lightning glow of satire and the graces of a lively and tender fancy. Yet both the satire and the fancy were made subservient to the speaker's main object, the conviction of the hearer. Neither was suffered to interfere with the cogent sequence of the argument; neither was allowed to wander into unnecessary digressions.

As an orator, Fox's marked characteristic was his directness. He went straight to his goal, with all the rigour of a mathematician working out a given problem.

ledge he added a sweetness and an amenity of temper which extorted the praises even of his political opponents."—*'History of Civilization,'* i. 409. "It may be questioned if any politician," remarks Lord Brongham, "in any age, ever knew so thoroughly the various interests and the exact position of all the countries with which his own had dealings to conduct or relations to maintain."—*'Sketches of Statesmen,'* i. 219. "He was of the most artless, candid, open, and benevolent disposition," says Burke, "disinterested in the extreme; of a temper mild and placable even to a fault, without one drop of gall in his whole constitution."—*Parl. Hist.* xxviii. 306. Lord Holland speaks of him as "the best and greatest man of our time . . . beloved and almost adored by all who approached him."—*'Memoirs of the Whig Party,'* i. 272, 273.

For this purpose he was content to sacrifice all that profuseness of ornament in which Burke indulged, and that accurate polish of diction which the younger Pitt affected. He never repeated himself; never went over a line of reasoning he had already traced; never (to use Lord Brougham's expressive simile) went back upon a ground which he had utterly wasted and withered up by the tide of fire he had rolled over it. There was a steadiness and progressiveness of movement in his oratory which resembled the resistless march of Cromwell's Ironsides. Some speakers double back in their deliverances with as many windings as a hare, until it becomes exceedingly difficult for their audience to follow the sinuous course, and to be in with them at the close. His absorbing attention to the object he had in view rendered Fox very careless and negligent in his style. We often come in his speeches upon tracts of dreary commonplace, of which a schoolboy would be almost ashamed; and such were spoken, we are told, with considerable hesitancy. But these once passed, what brilliant passages delight and amaze us! How pungent the sarcasm, how fierce the diatribe, how tender the pathos, how massive the reasoning! There was no weapon which he employed more frequently or more happily than wit. It has been said of him that he was the wittiest speaker of his day, the day of Sheridan and Windham; and this was the opinion both of Pitt and Canning, the latter, certainly, an admirable judge. And it was all the more effective because never used for mere display, but to assist in strengthening and illuminating his argumentative declamation.

Lord Brougham refers to the speeches of Fox in 1791, on the Russian armament; in 1797, on Parliamentary Reform; and, in 1803, on the renewal of the French War, as his greatest. He himself esteemed the last to be his best; and it is interesting to note that it followed what was perhaps the finest of his great rival, Pitt's. That which he pronounced on the Catholic Question in 1805 was a splendid performance: the views of policy set forth were broad and bold; the appeals to justice, magnanimous; the argument, almost incredibly close and forcible. Another effort of almost equal excellence was the speech on the Westminster Scrutiny in 1784, which owes something perhaps to its personal interest, the returning officer having refused to declare Fox elected, because a scrutiny had been demanded. Again, the fact that the speaker had only to allude to details and not to state them, inasmuch as they were already well known to his audience; the adequate grounds of attack which he had against his adversary; and the popular nature of the subject, all combined to fill this great oration with a wonderful life and energy. A cry of "Order" which his opponents raised at the outset, when he boldly asserted that instead of expecting indulgence, he scarcely hoped for justice from the House, afforded him an excuse for dwelling on the topic, and driving it home with illustration upon illustration, until his audience was completely awed and silenced by "the redoubled blows and repeated bursts of declamation."

The effect produced by Mr. Fox's speeches, as we learn from his contemporaries, was very great. He could lash his hearers into a storm of indignation, or move

them to melting pity, or excite them to sympathetic laughter, at his will. To his voice he was much indebted, for its lower tones were wonderfully sweet and musical, and when raised to its highest pitch, it was resonant with power. Its compass, however, was limited, and it was apt to run into an unpleasant shrillness. His gestures were without grace, and he had not the commanding person or expressive countenance of his eminent rival. His accent and pronunciation were classically correct; and a fine taste regulated his choice of language. His speeches will be found a well of English undefiled; for he eschewed foreign words and idioms, relying on the ample resources of that mother-tongue which he had mastered so completely.

Sir Robert Grant * affirms that Mr. Fox's oratory was distinguished by the inimitable appearance, which it always wore, of perfect genuineness and sincerity. While the quality that gave character to Mr. Pitt's oratorical displays was greatness of soul, that which informed the speaking of his rival, says Grant, was depth of heart. This is probably a correct estimate; for Fox was a man of the liveliest sympathies and of great impressibility of disposition. Through the ordeal of a youth of dissipation and of a father's foolish indulgence, his generous nature passed unscathed; nor were his sensibilities deadened by a life of political action and party intrigue. He was always on the side of the weak and oppressed, and his parliamentary conduct was greatly influenced by his feelings. Thus he became naturally the defender of the Colonies when struggling for their constitutional privileges, and

* Quarterly Review, August, 1810.

of France when labouring to throw off the cruel fetters of an arbitrary government. He began life as a Tory, but we can now see that a man of his character would necessarily be attracted to the opposite party, with its traditions of civil and religious freedom. The great failure of his life, his coalition with Lord North, was in no small measure attributable to the strength of his affections, which made him willing to venture everything for the sake of his followers. To the depth of kindness in his nature was due his incessant effort for the abolition of the Slave Trade, a cause in which he laboured as assiduously and as disinterestedly as Wilberforce himself.

For this, as well as for his support of Lord Erskine in his amendment of the injurious Law of Libel, his country owes him its lasting gratitude; and Tories may join with Whigs in paying a tribute of respect to the services of so great an orator and so amiable a statesman. But the noblest portion of his life was those years of struggle, from 1793 to 1804, when, at the head of a small but gallant band, he maintained the cause of freedom, imperilled by the follies and excesses of its own partisans. "If," says Brougham, "to the genius and the courage of Erskine we may justly be said to owe the escape from proscription and from arbitrary power, Fox stands next to him as the preserver of that sacred fire of liberty which they saved to blaze forth in happier times. Nor could even Erskine have triumphed as he did, had not the party which Fox so nobly led persevered in maintaining the holy warfare, and in rallying round them whatever was left of the old English spirit to resist oppression."

Charles James Fox was the third son of that Henry Fox, first Lord Holland, to whom we have had frequent occasion to refer in the foregoing pages. His mother was Lady Georgina Caroline, eldest daughter of Charles, second Duke of Richmond;* and he was born in Conduit Street, London, on the 24th of January, 1749. In his childhood attention was drawn to the precocity of his intelligence and the amiability of his disposition. When his son was seven years old, the always fond and indulgent father writes:—"He is all life, spirits, and good-humour . . . stage-mad, but it makes him read a good deal." Naturally he was of a passionate temper; but he was induced to bring it under control by overhearing a conversation between his parents. "Charles is dreadfully passionate," said Lady Caroline, "what shall we do with him?" "Oh, never mind," replied his father; "he is a very sensible little fellow, and will learn to cure himself." "I will not deny," remarked Fox, in after life, "that I was a very sensible little boy, a very clever little boy, and what I heard made an impression on me, and was of use to me afterwards."

Having acquired the first rudiments of education at a preparatory school at Wandsworth, he was sent to Eton in 1758. There he had the advantage of studying under the Rev. Mr. Francis, the father of the reputed "Junius," and the translator of Horace. In May, 1763, his father, who strove his utmost to spoil him, carried him off from school to the gaieties of Paris and

* This marriage of a Duke's daughter to a mere Commoner created a great sensation in the Court and fashionable circles of the time.

Spa, and initiated him into the mysteries of play. It was then he acquired that fatal passion for gambling which, in after life, proved so disastrous. Returning to Eton, he remained there until the summer of 1764, when he was entered at Hertford College, Oxford, which enjoyed a temporary celebrity from the scholarship of Dr. Newcome, afterwards Archbishop of Armagh. Some extracts from his letters to his friend Sir George, afterwards Lord Macartney, will enable us to form an idea of his character, taste, and habits at this time:—

“It is said that Charles Yorke [son of Lord Hardwicke] refused the Attorney-Generalship, because Lord Sandwich would not comply with some of his demands relative to Cambridge . . . Churchill [the satirist] is dead. His friend Wilkes has published a letter to his constituents at Aylesbury; it contains nothing but a justification of his conduct as to the ‘North Briton.’ He says it was respectful to the King. The ‘Essay on Woman’ he calls an idle poem, in which he had ridiculed nothing but a creed which the great Tillotson wished the Church of England fairly rid of. It contains violent abuse of Lord Mansfield . . . I like Oxford well enough. I read there a great deal, and am very fond of mathematics.”

Again he writes:—“I read here much, and like vastly (what I know you think useless) mathematics. I believe they are useful, and I am sure they are entertaining; which is alone enough to recommend them to me. I did not expect my life here could be so pleasant as I find it; but I really think, to a man who reads a great deal,

there cannot be a more pleasant place . . . I cannot suspect you again of being so devoid of taste as to fall in love with a woman under forty,* though as you have once begun to give way, you may perhaps be reduced in time to be in love with a tripping milliner girl of fifteen. I hear there is very deep play at Petersburg. I hope that will not tempt you to break your resolution against gaming . . . If there were any way of sending you pamphlets, I would send you a new poem, called 'The Traveller,' which appears to me to have a great deal of merit."

On the whole, the impression derived from these letters is that their writer is a young man of parts, with no great steadiness of principle, but no special inclination for vice. His friends and kinsmen, however, predicted at this early period his future eminence; and in some verses by Lord Carlisle on his companions at Eton, Charles Fox is selected to play the most conspicuous part in the British Senate. It is more singular that his long rivalry with William Pitt, his junior by ten years, should also have been anticipated. It is said that, on one occasion, his mother, Lady Caroline, remonstrating with her husband on his excessive indulgence of his brilliant son, added:—"I have been this morning with Lady Hester Pitt [Lady Chatham], and there is little William Pitt, not eight years old, and really the cleverest child I ever saw, and brought up so strictly and so proper in his behaviour, that, mark my words, that little boy will be a thorn in Charles's side as long as he lives."

* Lord Macartney was accustomed to say that a woman was never beautiful until she had passed forty.

The latter part of 1766, and the whole of 1767, he spent in travel on the Continent, occupying himself with the assiduous study of French and Italian literature, and indulging largely in French composition, both prose and verse. He took extraordinary pains to polish his attempts, showing a scrupulous attention to every detail of accent or metre. It has been well said that throughout life he was distinguished by this passion for excellence. Not only would he write and re-write with unwearied iteration every *jeu d'esprit* which flowed from his fertile pen, but at every little diversion or employment—chess, cards, carving at dinner—he exercised his faculties laboriously until he had attained the degree of perfection aimed at. In later life he was asked how, being so corpulent, he contrived to pick up with such ease the “cut” balls at tennis. His answer explains the secret of his success alike as scholar, statesman, and speaker: “Because I am a very painstaking man.” After his appointment as Secretary of State in 1782, he engaged a writing-master, and wrote copies like a schoolboy, because some comment had been made on his bad writing. So, too, when he lived in the country, he worked hard to become a practical gardener; and to qualify himself for carving, he had a small book of instructions in the “art,” and the problems set forth in it he carefully solved by imitating upon real joints the lines laid down in the engravings. To this minuteness of labour and closeness of application was due the ease with which he accomplished so many difficult things so well. While bringing together these particulars of his youth and early manhood, it is well to remember that

he had a great passion for acting, and that one of his favourite amusements was taking part in private theatricals. His knowledge of our dramatic literature was extensive; and to the last his love of the stage endured.*

During Fox's absence on the Continent he was returned to Parliament as member for Midhurst; namely, in May, 1798, when he was only nineteen years and four months old. He did not take his seat until the following November, and his first speech was made on the 9th of March, 1769. He spoke again on the 14th of April, supporting the motion for the expulsion of Wilkes; and his fluency, animation, and knowledge of his subject produced a very favourable impression. His third speech, on the 8th of May, was in opposition to Burke, afterwards his guide, philosopher, and friend. "Charles Fox," says Horace Walpole, "not yet twenty-one, answered Burke with great quickness and parts, but with confidence equally premature." He had not yet thought out his political principles, and not unnaturally, followed in

* During his Continental tour he visited Geneva in company with Uvedale Price (author of the 'Essays on the Picturesque'), who afterwards gave Rogers an account of their interview with Voltaire:—"I was there," he said, "travelling with Charles Fox, who wrote to Voltaire to beg he would allow us to come. He very civilly answered, the name of Fox was sufficient, though he received hardly any visitors, *et que nous venions pour l'interrompre*. He did not ask us to dine with him, but conversed a short time, walking backwards and forwards in his garden, gave us some chocolate, and dismissed us. I am sorry to give you so meagre an account; but all I can recollect of his conversation, and that a mere nothing, is that, after giving us a list of some of his works, which he thought might open our minds and free them from any religious prejudices, he said, '*Voilà des livres dont il faut se munir*.'"

his father's footsteps, supporting the Government, which was then in the hands of "the King's friends." It is strange, however, to find the future champion of civil rights and constitutional freedom defending the return of Luttrell for Middlesex, in opposition to the declared votes of the great majority of electors, and advocating the taxation of the American colonies. His conduct necessarily involved him in the unpopularity that attended the Ministry.

In 1770, on the formation of the Government of Lord North, Charles Fox was appointed a Lord of the Admiralty. Walpole writes:—"Charles Fox shines equally at the hazard-table and in the House of Commons; he was twenty-one yesterday se'nnight, and is already one of our best speakers. Yesterday he was made a Lord of the Admiralty." The appointment was ill received out-of-doors, and afforded a fertile theme to the caricaturists. He was designated "the Young Cub," and his love of gaming* and the bottle were ridiculed in many a coarse but telling print. In the 'Oxford Magazine' for February, 1770, appeared an engraving labelled "The Death of the Foxes." An old fox and a young fox are hanging side by side from a gallows, while the farmer, John Bull, and his wife, exult at the deliverance of

* "Fox was the most undaunted and the most unsuccessful gambler at Brookes'. He was often heard to say that the greatest pleasure in life was winning at hazard, and the next approaching to it was losing at hazard." —RAIKES, 'Journal,' iii. 121. Gaming was a family vice. It was of his elder brother, Stephen, that General Fitzpatrick wrote the epigram, beginning:—

"In gaming, indeed, he's the stoutest of cocks,
No man will play deeper than this Mr. Fox."

their poultry-yard from such rapacious visitors. In the same periodical occurs an allusion to his corpulence, in a pretended "cross-reading." Thus :—"Speaker on the side of Admin . . . n, the Hon. C. Fox, Esq. . . . He is reckoned the fattest man in England next to Mr. Bright."

Some notices of Mr. Fox's public career in 1771 may be found in Walpole's 'Memoirs.' When, on March 18th, it was proposed to commit the Lord Mayor of London for alleged contempt of the House, "Charles Fox, as if impatient to inherit his father's unpopularity, abused the city as his father used to do, but Ministers were moderate." It is not surprising, therefore, that in the riot of the 27th of March, when the Lord Mayor went to the House of Commons, and Lord North was saved from the fury of the populace only through the intervention of Sir William Meredith, "the two Foxes were as rudely handled, and escaped as narrowly." On the 10th of April Walpole writes :—"When Lord North opened the budget, Thomas Townshend reflected on Lord Holland as author of the proscriptions at the beginning of the reign. Charles Fox said he did not believe his father had had any hand in them, but, if he had, it was right to break the power of the aristocracy that had governed in the name of the late King. Charles Fox asked me afterwards in private if the accusation against his father was just. I replied, I could not but say it was." It would seem that Fox's generous sympathies were already beginning to assert themselves, and that he was not wholly satisfied with his position as the defender

of the royal prerogative and the advocate of a narrow and exclusive legislation.

A glimpse of his excesses is furnished by an entry dated January 6th, 1772 :—

“ Charles Fox, whose ambition was checked by the inactivity in Parliament, gave notice in the House of Commons that he intended, on that day fortnight, to make a motion for the repeal of the Marriage Act, in order to bring in a bill. . . . When he moved this repeal he had not read the Marriage Act, nor did he till some days after. A few evenings before he had been at Brompton on two errands—one to consult Justice Fielding on the penal laws, the other to borrow £10,000, which he brought to town on the hazard of being robbed. As the gaming and extravagance of young men of quality had arrived now at a pitch never heard of, it is worth while to give some account of it. They had a club at Almack’s, in Pall Mall, where they played only for rouleaus of £50 each, and generally there was £10,000 in specie on the table. Lord Holland had paid above £20,000 for his two sons. Nor were the manners of the gamesters, or even their dresses for play, undeserving notice. They began by pulling off their embroidered clothes and putting on frieze great coats, or turned their coats inside outwards for luck. They put on pieces of leather (such as are worn by footmen when they clean the knives) to save their laced ruffles, and, to guard their eyes from the light and to prevent tumbling their hair, wore high-crowned straw hats with broad brims and adorned with flowers and ribbons ; masks to conceal their emotions when they played at quinze. Each gamester

had a small neat stand by him, to hold their tea, or a wooden bowl, with an edge of ormolu, to hold their rouleaus. They borrowed of Jews great sums at exorbitant premiums. Charles Fox called his outward room, where those Jews waited till he rose, his Jerusalem Chamber."

Though it is evident that Fox had already acquired a considerable influence in the House, few persons could have anticipated that a young man so passionately addicted to the worst forms of dissipation, would eventually show himself a sagacious statesman, and figure as the head of the great Whig party. The "Black Boy," as Junius called him in allusion to his swarthy complexion, while, for the same reason, the caricaturists nicknamed him "Niger," was then remarkable chiefly for his social qualities, his vehement Toryism, and his vigour in debate. But he was beginning to lie uneasily under the burden of his inherited political prejudices; and in 1774, his quarrel with Lord North on the "Royal Family Bill" set him free to join the Opposition. On the 24th of February, Walpole writes to Sir Horace Mann:—"The famous Charles Fox was this morning turned out of his place, for great flippancies in the House towards Lord North. His parts will now have a full opportunity of showing whether they can balance his character, or whether patriotism can whitewash it." The popular opinion of that character was reflected in a caricature that had appeared a few weeks previously. Lord Holland, the old fox, seated at a table, is offering his son and heir, seated on his left, some serious counsel, to which he appears to give his best attention. Charles the younger sits on his father's right and picks his pocket. Over

his head runs the label, "*Hic niger est*"; beneath him, on the ground, lie a couple of dice and a copy of "*Hoyle's Games*," while the devil, hidden under the table, holds him chained by the feet. The engraving bears the epigraph of "*Robbed between sun and sun*."

Fox opposed the Royal Marriages Bill, which George the 3rd had himself devised and forced upon his Ministers with particular energy. He was thus brought into friendly relations with Burke and Wedderburne. In reference to the speeches of the three orators, Walpole writes: "Burke's wit, allusions, and enthusiasm were striking, but not imposing; Wedderburne * was a sharp, clever arguer, though unequal; Charles Fox, much younger than either, was universally allowed to have seized the first point of argument throughout with most amazing rapidity and clearness, and to have excelled even Charles Townshend as a Parliament man, though inferior in wit and variety of talents."

Another of Fox's contemporaries, a Mr. Crawford, supplies us with a more detailed description of Fox's qualities as a debater in this early stage of his career. "Charles Fox," he records, "had great facility of delivery, his words flowed rapidly; but he had nothing of Burke's variety of language or correctness;

* Alexander Wedderburne, first Earl of Rosslyn, born 1733, died 1805. He was called to the English bar in 1757. As an adherent of Lord Bute's, he was satirised by Churchill:—"A pert prime prater of the northern race." Solicitor-General, 1771; Attorney-General, 1775; Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, with the title of Lord Loughborough, 1780; Lord High Chancellor, 1793; Earl of Rosslyn, 1801,—such were the different stages of his prosperous career. He had little legal learning, and less principle.

nor his method, yet his arguments were far more shrewd. Burke," he adds, "was indefatigable, learned, and versed in every branch of eloquence; Fox was dissolute, dissipated, idle beyond measure. He was that very morning returned from Newmarket, where he had lost some thousand pounds the preceding day; he had stopped at Hockerell where he found company, had sat up all night drinking, and had not been in bed when he came to move his bill, which he had not even drawn up. This was genius, was almost inspiration."

Fox's conduct on the Royal Marriage Bill provoked the implacable resentment of George the 3rd. He wrote to Lord North:—"I am greatly incensed at the presumption of Charles Fox . . . Indeed, that young man has so thoroughly cast off every principle of common honour and honesty, that he must become as contemptible as he is odious . . . I think Mr. Charles Fox would have acted more becoming to you and himself, if he had absented himself from the House; for his conduct is not to be attributed to conscience, but to his aversion to all restraints."

II.

Fox's political career dates, properly speaking, from 1774. That, too, is the year which marks the beginning of the American struggle for independence. It was fortunate for Fox's fame, as well as for the interests of truth and freedom, that he had left the North Administration before this great question had become material. He was thus set free to consider it "on its merits"; to devote to it a strong, clear, and unbiassed judgment; and to examine into the important principles which it involved. Probably Lord Holland is right in thinking that had he remained in office his chivalrous spirit, and his keen sense of the duty of adhering to the professions and watchwords of party, would have led him at the outset to defend the conduct of the Government under which he served; and the habit of supporting ministers without regard to principle, as well as the unhappy paternal lessons he had received on political prudence and Court allegiance, might have accustomed him to acts of arbitrary authority. It cannot be doubted that Fox was a Whig at heart; but that sacrifice of the old Whig policy to temporary party and personal interests which was seen in the two great errors of his political life is a proof that, under other circumstances, he might have yielded for a time to Court influences. He would never have made an honest Tory; and yet he might have been a courageous defender of a Tory

government. For of no statesman of equal genius can it be so truly said, as was said of Burke most unjustly, that he gave up to party what was meant for mankind. We repeat, therefore, that it was fortunate for Fox's reputation, and for the cause of liberty, that his secession from office prevented him from being bound by fetters, which, however he might have loathed them, his feelings of loyalty and obedience would never have permitted him to shake off.

In justice to the first Lord Holland it should be admitted that, though he taught his son some injurious political lessons which his son happily unlearned, he taught him also some very wise ones by which he greatly profited. Lord Holland was bred in the school of Walpole; and there he acquired that abhorrence of unnecessary war, that attachment to religious toleration, and that regard for the general interests of the community, which he transmitted to his son. Of the legacy thus inherited, Fox made a noble use. Into the political system of Walpole he infused an elevation and a generosity and a breadth which Walpole never knew. Much he gained from Burke; but, on the whole, his sympathies were wider than those of his Gamaliel; and though more intimately connected with the aristocratic classes than he was, his inclinations were far more decidedly democratic. Fox was by no means an orthodox statesman. In his contempt for class-privileges he went beyond most of the leaders of his party. If he could be independent of the Court, he could also disregard at need the great Whig families. Had he lived in our own day he would have heartily ac-

cepted every point of the popular creed, and in the Liberal ranks would assuredly have been one of the foremost.

In 1774 Mr. Fox was twenty-five years old. He had already made a considerable reputation in the country, and in the House spoke always to eagerly-listening benches. He was a fine classical scholar; well read in ancient and modern poetry; a consummate student of history; and thoroughly versed in the constitutional practices and traditions of his country. But, as we have seen, a fatal vice had absorbed too much of his leisure, ruined his fortune, and undermined his influence. At this early age, his passion for gambling had plunged him into an ocean of debt. The anxieties of his condition preyed upon his mind; and great was the relief when his indulgent father discharged his debts to the extent of £140,000. Gibbon asserts that on one occasion he sat playing at hazard for twenty-four hours, and lost £11,000. And Walpole relates that in a debate on the Militia Bill in November, 1775, Fox having said that it could not be trusted in the hands of men who petitioned the King to prosecute the war against the American colonies, his cousin Acland, a furious Tory, sarcastically replied, that "it was fitter in their hands than in those of men who had ruined themselves by the most scandalous vices." Fox acknowledged the justice of the reproof, and gently replied, that he confessed his errors, and wished he could atone for them.

The Whig Opposition, in 1774, was led by Lord Rockingham in the Peers, and by Burke and "dull Dowdes-

well" in the Commons. The nobleman, with great clearness of judgment and honesty of purpose, was no orator, and his ill-health and want of vigour rendered him averse to action. Burke, with all his genius and all his eloquence, never attained to a strong position in Parliament; and Dowdeswell had neither skill nor energy as a debater. The accession of Fox, with his surpassing talents, his courage, his chivalry, and his fervour, was an immense gain to the Opposition; and it was he who took up the work begun by Chatham, organised the Whigs in firm resistance to the disastrous policy of the American War, and finally led them to victory.

We have already sketched the principal features of that memorable struggle, and shall now confine ourselves to a record of the incidents in which Fox took part. At first he had the advantage of Burke as a political foster-father, and from him he imbibed liberal ideas of government, of the relations of class to class, and of the citizen to the State. But in the breadth and vigour of his opinions, he soon surpassed his instructor, whom he virtually, but by no means intentionally, superseded as parliamentary leader of the Whigs. That such was the case is no matter for surprise. His oratory was far better adapted than Burke's to catch the ear of the House of Commons. It was that of a ready, skilful, and self-reliant debater, who was never caught unprepared, and who, skilful in detecting the joints in his opponent's armour, seldom exposed himself to attack. He was a masterly reasoner; and would "state a case" with all the lucidity, terseness, and ease of

an accomplished advocate. Moreover, his natural qualities eminently adapted him for the post of a Party-leader. Burke wrapped himself up in the profundity of his meditations. Fox was always accessible, liberal-handed, open-hearted, incapable of malice as of jealousy, never remembering an offence, ready to notice and encourage a novice, simple in his habits, and engaging in his manners.

4 We read that in October, 1776, in the debate on the Address, he replied to Lord George Germaine, the Secretary of State, in one of his finest and most animated orations. Gibbon, the historian, though a Tory in his sympathies, declared that he had never heard a more masterly speech in his life. In the following year he opposed with characteristic vigour Lord North's Bill for the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, so far as regarded persons charged with high-treason in North America. After a visit to Ireland, during which he made the acquaintance of Henry Grattan, he resumed his attendance in the House in November, with a result very graphically described by Lord Ossory:—

“The most material event I have to mention to you is the meeting of Parliament last week. You will see by the speech and address, that we have so much pleasure and delight in the American war, that we pledge ourselves to support the prosecution of it, notwithstanding the total ignorance we are in respecting the situation of our armies. There was scarce the difference of a vote in either House. In ours for two days' debate, I never remember such a superiority in point of speaking,

argument, reason, everything but numbers. Our friend [Fox] exceeded himself, and pronounced a grand philippic against the American Secretary [Lord George Germaine], whom he held up as the author of all the mischief. He went rather too far, and the House did not go along with him. The epithets he bestowed were—‘That inauspicious and ill-omened character, whose arrogance and presumption, whose ignorance and inability,’—in short, he quite *terrassé’d* him; so much, that I think he will never exhibit himself to that House, as its leader, so long as the other sits in it. The philippic did not seem unacceptable to the other party in Administration, though the Premier declared the acquisition of the Secretary was a great credit to them. Burke, Sir George Savile, and General Conway, were all excellent in their different ways. Old Chatham was in high spirits; the amendment in both Houses was his, and they say parts of his speech were very fine.”

Walpole has a characteristic reference to the same occasion :—

“The only brilliant part of the debate was a bitter philippic on Lord George Germaine, by Charles Fox, in his highest manner. He called him an ill-omened and inauspicious character, and, besides blaming the choice of a man pronounced unfit to serve the Crown,* dwelt on his ignorance and incapacity for conducting a war. The

* Better known as Lord George Sackville. His conduct at the Battle of Minden (1759) had been the subject of inquiry by a court-martial, and he had been dismissed the army for want of courage, conduct, and ability. Afterwards, however, he showed great bravery and decision on more than one occasion. Born, 1716: died, 1785.

attack was by moderate men thought too personal and too severe. It was felt in the deepest manner by Lord George, who rose in the utmost consternation, and made the poorest figure. He said the man in the world who he chose should abuse him had done so. General Conway said the next day he was exactly of a contrary opinion. Lord North handsomely defended Lord George, and said he was glad Fox had abandoned him, an old hulk, to attack a man-of-war; but afterwards he perhaps hurt Lord George as much as Fox had done, for the latter coming up to the Treasury benches, Lord North said, in Lord George's hearing, 'Charles, I am glad you did not fall on me to-day, for you was [*sic*] in full feather.' "

In each stormy debate, indeed, Fox appeared in full feather; always prompt and resolute in the attack, and overpowering his adversaries by the weight of his arguments and the strenuousness of his invectives. Some bitter personalities which he uttered in debate in November, 1779, led to a duel between him and Mr. Adam. It took place on the 20th. Fox was wounded; but after receiving his opponent's fire he threw away his pistol, and declared that he had no intention of giving personal offence. At this time his popularity in the country was immense; and, in consequence, the Court looked upon him with particular enmity. The position of the Ministry in 1780 was anything but enviable. Not enjoying the public confidence, and confronted by an Opposition formidable from the capacity, eloquence, and daring of its leaders, it held office only through the support of the King* and the "King's

* Fox, in his speech on the Address, (November 25th), openly stated

friends." It was held responsible, and not without reason, for the disasters in America. Petitions demanding, oftentimes in very strong language, parliamentary reform and retrenchment of expenditure, poured in upon the table of the House, representing the opinions, it was said, of one hundred thousand electors. Never before had so large a proportion of the constituency united to recommend any measure to the consideration of Parliament. The 6th of April was fixed for the debate upon the prayer of these petitions. A call of the House was ordered. A great meeting of the Westminster reformers was convened by the Whig chiefs, and attended by the Duke of Portland, the Cavendishes, the Grenvilles, Lord Temple, the Townshends, and Fitzpatrick. Charles Fox was placed in the chair. On the momentous 6th, Mr. Dunning,* a lawyer of high

that he had long observed the plan of government pursued in every department. "It was not the mere rumour of the streets that the king was his own minister; the fatal truth was evident, and had made itself evident, in every circumstance of the war carried on against America and the West Indies."—*Parl. Hist.* xx. 420.

* John Dunning, born at Ashburton in 1731; died, 1788. Was called to the bar in 1756, and rose into repute through his able management of an action in which the East India Company was concerned. Afterwards he was employed to defend Wilkes. Was made Solicitor-General in 1767. In the Rockingham administration he held the chancellorship of the duchy of Lancaster and was created Baron Ashburton. When asked how he contrived to accomplish the immense amount of legal business that fell to his share, he replied, "Some did itself; some he did; some was left undone." Lord Shelburne said of him, that as a speaker he never seemed to take up a subject *con amore* unless *wrong* was on his side. But he was often energetic enough in the defence of right; and he did much to secure the personal liberty of the subject by his great speech in the Wilkes case against the validity of general warrants.

ability, and a politician of no mean calibre, moved his memorable resolution, "that the influence of the Crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished."* He introduced it, as Mr. Massey remarks, with a moderation of language which became the authority of his position in the House. He said that it was in accordance with the general tenour of the petitions on the table, though not in accordance with their exact terms; and vindicated its accuracy, by referring to common notoriety, as well as to particular cases, which he quoted with the precision and aptitude of a skilful advocate. He was supported by Fox with his usual vigour; and the motion was carried† by 233 to 215. Another resolution, affirming the right of the House to examine into and correct abuses in the Civil List expenditure, was affirmed without opposition; as well as a third motion, declaratory of the duty of the House to provide immediate and effectual redress for the grievances stated by the petitioners.

That Fox was always more advanced in his opinions than Burke, that his Whiggism had in effect much of what we should now-a-days call a Radical colouring, may be inferred from his speech and vote in favour of triennial parliaments on the 8th of May, when Burke's speech and vote were given against them. It is possible, however, that Fox would now be found their opponent, if he could revisit the stage on which he once made so splendid and conspicuous a figure. The causes no

* 'Parliamentary History,' xxi. 330.

† With the addition, suggested by Dundas, of the prefatory words, "It is necessary to declare."

longer exist which then, we may presume, influenced his action; such as the corruption of Parliament, the imperfect representation of public opinion, and the excessive power of the Crown.

The Gordon "No Popery" Riots in June, 1780, seem to have inclined the Government to seek the support of the Rockingham party, and negotiations were opened between Lord North and its principal members. As they proved abortive, no special reference to them is necessary, further than to indicate the King's continued prejudice against Fox. He absolutely refused to admit him to any ministerial office, but suggested that he would be content with one of a lucrative character, though not in the administration. "He never had any principle," writes the generous monarch, "and can therefore act as his interest may guide him." The negotiations also show that Lord North, at heart, deeply regretted the King's obstinate perseverance in the American War, and his aversion to the admission into his councils of the advocates of peace, reform, and economy.

At the general election of 1780, Fox stood for Westminster, and was returned by a large majority over his competitor, Lord Lincoln. He was afterwards carried in triumph through the borough. In February, he supported Burke's bill for the reduction of the enormous Civil List. (This was on the 26th). "The young men in Opposition," says Walpole, "made a considerable figure, particularly John Townshend [second son to the Viscount], Sheridan [then manager of Drury Lane Theatre], both intimate friends of Charles Fox, and William Pitt, who Lord North declared made the best

first speech he ever heard." Said a member to Fox, after hearing this oration, "He will be one of the first men in Parliament." "He is so already," was Fox's reply.* The future rivals were thus for a time thrown side by side, and there can be little doubt but that their political views and inclinations were not very dissimilar. But Pitt necessarily attached himself to the Chatham section of the Whigs, against whose recognised leader, Lord Shelburne, Fox entertained a strong prejudice. Moreover, two suns cannot shine in one hemisphere; and the harmonious cooperation of two men so nearly equal in intellectual power but so different in character, even though holding the same principles, could hardly extend over any considerable period.

Fox's devotion to his parliamentary duties was at no time incompatible with his pursuit of excitement in other

* Lord Holland relates that Fox hastened to compliment and congratulate the young member. As he was doing so, a General Grant passed by them and said, "Aye, Mr. Fox, you are praising young Pitt for his speech. You may well do so; for, excepting yourself, there's no man in the House can make such another; and, old as I am, I expect and hope to hear you both battling it within those walls, as I have done your fathers before you." Mr. Fox, disconcerted at the awkward turn of the compliment, was silent and looked foolish; but young Pitt, with great delicacy, readiness, and felicity of expression, answered, "I have no doubt, General, you would like to attain the age of Methusaleh." He had not, however, to attain to such longevity to see his prediction fulfilled. Sir Samuel Romilly, 'Memoirs,' i. 192, says:—"William Pitt, the late Lord Chatham's son, has made a great figure this session in Parliament; he has spoken only twice, but both his speeches have gained him uncommon approbation. Applause was echoed from one side of the House to the other; and Fox, in an exaggerated strain of panegyric, said he could no longer lament the loss of Lord Chatham, for he was again living in his son, with all his virtues and all his talents."

and less commendable forms. In May, 1781, we find Walpole writing to Horace Mann: "Gaming is yet general, though money, the principal ingredient, does not abound. My old favourite game, 'faro,' is lately revived Mr. Fox is the first figure in all the places I have mentioned, the hero in Parliament, at the gaming-table, at Newmarket. Last week he passed twenty-four hours without interruption at all three, or on the road from the one to the other." It is a proof of our advance in social morality that such excesses nowadays would infallibly prevent their author from attaining a Parliamentary position, and burden him with popular odium. On the 2nd of June, Fox's library, which some remorseless creditor had seized, was sold by auction. "Amongst the books," says Walpole, "was Mr. Gibbon's first volume of Roman History, which appeared by the title-page to have been given by the author to Mr. Fox, who had written in it the following anecdote:—'The author, at Burke's, said there was no salvation for this country till six heads of the principal persons in the administration were laid on the table; eleven days after, this same gentleman accepted the place of Lord of Trade, under those very Ministers, and has acted with them ever since!'" Such was the avidity of bidders for the smallest production of so conspicuous a politician, that owing to the addition of this little record the book sold for three guineas.

In March, 1782, the North Administration, probably the worst that ever controlled the affairs of this country, was driven from office. On Lord North himself, however, our judgment need not be too severe. While we

cannot but blame him for carrying out a policy which he is known to have disapproved. We must remember that he was prevented from resigning office by the urgent pressure put upon him by the King. His unfortunate facility of disposition, and his exaggerated sense of the duty of a subject, made him the pliant instrument of an obstinate and narrow-minded monarch ; but, as a man, his genial temper secured him a host of friends, and even his opponents could not but admire his considerable parts and his facile wit. He had risen into special favour with George the 3rd, because, in a time of much difficulty and danger, on the resignation of the Duke of Grafton, he had consented to assume the office of First Lord of the Treasury. And whatever may be thought of the measures which he introduced, or of his system of administration generally, it must be allowed that he manifested on all occasions no ordinary courage and capacity. Scarcely any prime minister has been called upon to contend against such formidable antagonists as those with whom Lord North crossed swords ; such opponents as Chatham, and Burke, and Fox, supported by Barré, Dunning, Townshend, Lee, and a host of other able debaters. Nor have many Ministers had to encounter such critical difficulties ; discontent at home, hostile alliances on the Continent, and a revolt in America ; all aggravated and augmented by the absolutist tendencies of the sovereign. "Such was the strife," says Brougham, "and in such untoward circumstances, which Lord North had to maintain, with the help only of his attorney and solicitor-generals, Thurlow and Wedderburne, to whom was afterwards added Dundas. But a weight far more than sufficient

to counterbalance this accession was at the same time flung into the opposite scale, and rendered its preponderance still more decided. Mr. Pitt signalized his entrance into Parliament by the most extraordinary eloquence, at once matured and nearly perfect in its kind, and by lending all its aid and all its ornament to the Opposition. Nothing daunted, the veteran minister persevered in maintaining the conflict, and was only driven from the helm after he had fought triumphantly for six years against the greater part of the Whig chiefs, and desperately for two more against the whole of the body thus powerfully reinforced." Conspicuous in this long and unequal war were his knowledge of men, his remarkable tact, his strong common-sense, his fluency and ease of speech, and his almost unfailing suavity of temper.

Of the ready wit with which he so often turned away wrath, and foiled the attack of an adversary, few examples have come down to us; but it was evidently spontaneous and good humoured,—“a pleasant, affable, recommending sort of wit,”—the wit of a gentleman, not of a professed epigrammatist.* Like the late Lord Palmerston, he frequently refreshed himself during a dull debate by a sound slumber. On one occasion, a furious opponent, observing him thus engaged, bitterly

* Soon after his resignation he remarked, that the Opposition, who had always complained of his publishing lying Gazettes, were no sooner in office than they set off with a Gazette more full of lies than any of his had been, for it contained a string of paragraphs each beginning, “His Majesty has been pleased to appoint, etc.,” when it is certain that the king was not pleased at any one of those appointments.—SIR S. ROMILLY, ‘Memoirs,’ i. 217.

denounced the Minister who could sleep while his country was ruined, and called aloud for his head. Lord North contented himself with replying, that it was cruel to begrudge him the indulgence granted to other criminals, a night's rest before their execution. When surprised in a similar performance by a very bad speaker, who manifested the utmost indignation, he remarked that it was unjust to wish to deprive him of so natural a release from considerable suffering; but, as if recollecting himself, added, that the gentleman had no right to complain of him for taking the remedy which he himself had been good enough to administer. And when Mr. Martin proposed that a starling should be placed near the Speaker's chair, and taught to repeat the cry of "Infamous coalition!" he coolly suggested that, so long as the worthy member was preserved to them, this would be a waste of the public money, since the starling could well perform his office by deputy. His natural pleasantry was advantageously exhibited in the manner of his resignation. When he at last obtained the King's consent, so often solicited in vain, he hastened to the House of Commons. A motion of Lord Surrey's, calling for the dismissal of Ministers, stood on the order list (March 20th), and the Whigs were anxious it should come on before Lord North's resignation was officially announced, that his removal from office might unmistakeably appear to be the act of the House of Commons. He and Lord Surrey rose at the same instant, and some disorder took place, which led Mr. Fox, with much quickness and address, to move, as the readiest method of extricating the House from its embarrassment, "that Lord Surrey be now heard."

With characteristic humour, and greater presence of mind, Lord North sprang to his feet, and said, "I rise to speak to that motion ;" and gave, as his reason for opposing it, the resignation and dissolution of the Ministry. Amid much excitement the House adjourned. It was a bitterly cold night, and the snow fell heavily. Expecting a long debate, the members had dismissed their carriages, and only Lord North's was in waiting. He put into it one or two of his friends, whom he had invited to go home with him, and turning to the crowd, chiefly composed of his exulting adversaries, he exclaimed with a genial smile, and in a tone which betrayed no vexation or irritability, "I *have* my carriage. You see, gentlemen, the advantage of being *in the secret*. Good night." *

The leading spirits in the new ministry were Rockingham and Shelburne, with Fox as Secretary of State and Leader of the House of Commons. Its watchwords, less common then than they have been of late years, were Peace, Reform, and Economy. It began by entering upon negotiations with the United States for the purpose of terminating a bloody and inglorious contest ; - but here Fox was much embarrassed by the assumption of undue authority on the part of his colleague, Lord Shelburne. It was also called upon to pacify Ireland, which was in a state of open rebellion. While resisting

* Frederick, Lord North, was born in 1733 ; entered Parliament in 1754, and was made a Lord of the Treasury in 1759. In 1767, he became Chancellor of the Exchequer. He succeeded to the title of Earl of Guildford in 1790, and died in 1792, in his 60th year. For the last five years of his life he was afflicted with blindness.

a motion for repealing the Act of George the 1st, which gave the English Government a control over the Irish Legislature, Fox was prepared to make all reasonable concessions. But he soon found that the time for such concessions had gone by, and the repeal was granted, which alone could satisfy the Irish nation. To limit the irregular influence of the Crown was another object which the Ministry had at heart; and measures were passed disqualifying contractors from sitting in Parliament, and depriving revenue officers of the elective franchise. Some reduction of the Civil Establishment was effected. On the question of parliamentary reform the government hesitated; though it was one which ought to have united in a firm phalanx the various sections of the Whigs. The Duke of Richmond, anticipating the projects of Radical reformers of a later time, favoured annual Parliaments and universal suffrage. Fox desired a thorough reform, but did not go to so violent an extreme. Burke took an optimistic view of things as they were. Accordingly, when Pitt moved for a committee of inquiry, and hinted at the abolition of rotten boroughs and the creation of real constituencies, the Ministry did not support him unanimously, and he was beaten by 20.

The unexpected death of Lord Rockingham dissolved the brief-lived administration. Fox and his friends wished the Duke of Portland to be his successor, but the King hastened to give the premiership to Shelburne. Fox, who distrusted Shelburne, and had many causes of complaint against him, at once resigned; and Lord Grantham and Thomas Townshend became Secretaries of State,

with Pitt for Chancellor of the Exchequer. Thenceforward Pitt and Fox were rivals; and the country was destined to suffer severely by the long-continued opposition of two great men, whose principles of policy were fundamentally the same, and who, had they worked together, would doubtlessly have anticipated many of the valuable reforms which have been accomplished within our own time.

The Shelburne Ministry lasted only long enough to conclude successfully the negotiations which the Rockingham cabinet had begun, and to restore peace between England, France, and America by the Treaty of Paris. It was overthrown in February, 1783, by that coalition between Fox and Lord North, which so astonished their contemporaries, and has been so strongly censured by posterity.* It was undoubtedly a bold proceeding, and, as Fox himself said, nothing but success could authorize it. "Unless a real good Government is the consequence," said General Fitzpatrick, "nothing can justify it to the public." Its condemnation, therefore, is to be found in its failure. And inasmuch as it overthrew the recognised landmarks of party, dissolved the legitimate alliances of statesmen, and brought upon Mr. Fox a burden of unpopularity which weakened for the rest of his life the influence of his genius, eloquence, and

* Shelburne had made overtures to Fox, but he refused to join unless Shelburne resigned the premiership to the Duke of Portland. He then turned to North, offering to admit his friends, but not himself. North, apprehending that Pitt and Fox might effect a junction, listened to the suggestions of Lord Loughborough, Mr. Cain, and others, that he should unite with Fox, and expel Shelburne.—WRAXALL, 'Memoirs,' iii. 254-277.

political foresight, it was undoubtedly an error. Another objection may be taken to it, that it was ill-timed. However worthy of criticism the peace of 1783, it was certainly as good a peace as Lord North could have made; and whatever blame attached to it was due to the misgovernment of Lord North himself, which had reduced the country to so humiliating a condition. Again: Mr. Fox at one time had directed against Lord North the fiercest invectives. If these were justifiable, it was clearly not his duty to unite with the man whom he had lashed in language so unsparing; if they were not justifiable, he stood before the people convicted of unmeaning passion and irrational anger. It has been well observed that Lord North readily forgave the utterance of these diatribes, but the public never forgave their being retracted. On the other hand, it is not to be forgotten that Lord North and Mr. Fox had no personal antipathies to overcome. They were both men of generous temper, kindly feelings, and simple, manly, straightforward character. What Fox said of himself, might be said of North: "*Amicitiae sempiternæ, inimicitiae placabiles.*" Nor were their political differences important, except, perhaps, as regarded the question of Parliamentary Reform. On other subjects North had opposed Fox because he was in office, and chose to consider himself the servant and mouth-piece of the King.*

* The extent of the King's interference with the Government, and the vast scope of his meddlesomeness, can be appreciated only by a study of his correspondence with Lord North, published by Lord Brougham in the Appendix to his '*Life of North*,' (Brougham's Collected Works, iii. 69,

Earl Russell thinks that the failure of the Coalition was not an accident, but a result involved in the elements of which it was composed. The King, forced by a violent pressure to take back Mr. Fox,* was an enemy constantly on the watch against his Ministers.† The nation was not very partial to Lord North, whose repeated miscarriages had humbled its pride; nor to Mr. Fox, whose social excesses had begun to alarm its morality, and whose boldness of language shook its confidence. At a later period the strong comment of Mr. Wilberforce was very generally endorsed: "that the Coalition partook of the vices of both its parents,—the corruption of the one, and the violence of the other."‡

Had this celebrated Coalition never been formed, it is possible that Fox and Pitt might have fought side by side, for the former was incapable of jealousy, and the

et seq.). One great object of Fox in his coalition with North, was to deal "a good stout blow" at the unconstitutional influence of the Crown.

* He had threatened to retire to Hanover. "Your Majesty may go," said Lord Thurlow, "nothing is more easy; but you may not find it so easy to return, when your Majesty becomes tired of staying there."

† He informed Lord Temple that to such a ministry he would never give his confidence, and that he would take the first moment for dismissing them.—'Courts and Cabinets of George the 3rd,' i. 302.

‡ "Their sudden union could not be affected without imputations injurious to the credit of both. Nor could it be disguised that personal ambition dictated their bold stroke for power, in which principles were made to yield to interest. It was the alliance of factions, rather than of parties; and on either side it was a grave political error. Viewed with disfavour by the most earnest of both parties, it alienated from the two leaders many of their best followers. Either party could have united with Lord Shelburne more properly than with one another."—*Sir T. Erskine May*, ii. 22.

latter might have been satisfied with an equal share of power. A cordial confederacy between these two illustrious statesmen would have saved the Whig party ; and, what is more important, would have cemented the union of Ireland and Great Britain by the repeal of the penal laws against the Roman Catholics, and have prevented the War of the French Revolution. But thus vanished the hope of "a more brilliant Fox and a more consistent Pitt; the one adorning and advising his country in the conduct of Foreign Affairs, which he above all men understood; and the other applying to the management of our finances the economical principles of Adam Smith, and the wise frugality of Sully."

The Coalition Ministry was strong in talent, debating power, and experience of public affairs. The Duke of Portland was First Lord of the Treasury ; Lord North, Home Secretary ; Fox, Foreign Secretary ; Lord John Cavendish, Chancellor of the Exchequer ; and the great seal was put in commission, the commissioners being Lord Loughborough, Sir W. H. Ashurst, and Sir Beaumont Hotham. Burke became Paymaster of the Forces ; Sheridan and Richard Burke, Secretaries to the Treasury ; and the Earl of Northington, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

The caricaturists were soon in the field against the new Administration. A print by Gillray, published on the 9th of March, represents in two compartments the position held by the different leaders towards each other before and after their union. The first is entitled "War." Burke and Fox, in characteristic attitudes, are thun-

dering against North, the Minister, and denouncing as "infamous" the idea of their marching at any time under his banner. North appears to be not less energetic in his condemnation of his two great opponents. The second compartment, entitled "Neither Peace nor War," shows the three orators, now united in one cause, in the same attitudes, but attacking the preliminaries of the peace signed at Paris. Beneath this document a dog makes his appearance, and barks angrily at the trio. The dog is an allusion, it is said, to an incident in the House of Commons which afforded Lord North an occasion for one of his pleasantries. While the First Minister, on the eve of his resignation, was delivering an animated defence of his government, a dog which had taken refuge under the benches, came out, and howled hideously. The House broke into a peal of laughter, which continued until the intruder was summarily expelled. The Minister then coolly remarked:—"As the new member has ended his argument, I beg to be allowed to continue mine."

A series of prints, nine in number, designated 'The Loves of the Fox and the Badger; or, The Coalition Wedding,' furnishes a burlesque-pictorial history of the alliance between Fox and Lord North, the latter of whom was popularly nicknamed "the badger." Mr. Wright speaks of a caricature by Sayers, published on the 17th of March, which represents North as painting white the dark visage of his new ally; a reference to his frank declaration in the House of Commons, "I have found him a warm friend, and a fair though formidable adversary." In yet another, the new Whig coach, with

the Fox's crest on the panels, is drawn by a couple of attenuated hacks along a very rough road, jogging every minute against some of the great stones flung in its way by the Opposition, and in one of its wheels showing decided symptoms of a collapse. Lord North, who is riding behind, is seriously alarmed; while Fox and the Duke of Portland, seated together on the box, are using their utmost exertions to draw in the reins.*

We believe, however, that the Coalition Ministry would have outlived its unpopularity,† and we are confident that it would have accomplished good work in the service of the Commonwealth, but for the ceaseless intrigues fomented against it by George the 3rd, who would neither conquer his old prejudice against Fox nor maintain his old partiality for North. The latter, after the Coalition, he denounced in even stronger terms than the former. He was shrewd enough to see that the new Ministry would surround the exercise of the prerogative with effectual limitations; and all his efforts were directed to their overthrow. When Fox, on the majority of the Prince of Wales, proposed to apply to Parliament for a grant of £100,000 a year, the King, who thought £50,000 would suffice, imagined that an opportunity had occurred for the realization of his desires. But Earl

* Fox said that *Sayers's caricatures* had done him more mischief than the debates in Parliament or the works of the press.—Twiss, 'Life of Lord Eldon,' i. 162.

† Fox, writing to Lord Northington in July, says:—"The Coalition gains, in my opinion, both strength and credit, and the only source of weakness is the idea of the King's dislike." Some details showing the general disfavour with which it was regarded will be found in Sir Samuel Romilly's 'Memoirs,' i. 270-275.

Temple persuaded him that the time was not favourable nor the pretext advisable; and a compromise was effected. The Prince got £50,000 from the Civil List, and £60,000 from Parliament for an outfit. The occasion so eagerly sought was found at last in Fox's East India Bill. In our notice of Mr. Burke we have briefly alluded to the details of this measure; * which on the whole was happily and boldly conceived. The evils to be remedied were enormous; and a drastic remedy was indispensable. The imputation of which the Court party made such skilful use, that it subverted the influence of the Crown, and placed in the Whig party a power opposed to the royal authority and the balance of the constitution, is absolutely unfounded. The Bill left the supreme control in the hands of the King's minister, the Secretary of State. The seven Commissioners whom it appointed held office only for four years, and were placed under the direct supervision of Parliament. We believe the Bill to have been an honest attempt to grapple with a great difficulty, and that Fox was animated by disinterested motives in submitting it to the House. He knew that by it his Ministry must stand or fall, and that, attacking as it did some powerful interests, it would surely provoke a determined and a bitter opposition.

To use his own words:—

“He was aware the measure he had proposed was a strong one. He knew that the task he had that day set himself was extremely arduous and difficult; he knew

* Earl Russell, in his ‘*Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox*,’ claims the India Bill as Mr. Fox's own; but letters are extant which refer to the draft of it as prepared by Burke.

that it had considerable risk in it; but when he took upon himself an office of responsibility, he had made up his mind to the situation and danger of it. He had left all thoughts of ease, indolence, and safety behind him. He remembered an honourable friend near him [Mr. Burke] had once said, half in jest half in earnest, 'that idleness was the best gift that God had bestowed upon man.' But this was not a time for indolence and regard to safety in a minister. The situation of the country called for vigorous exertion, for new measures, and for some risk; he knew that a minister who had no consideration but for his own safety might be quiet and secure; the consequence must be, the country would be ruined. How much better was it to venture what the exigency of affairs required; the minister, it was true, might be ruined, but his country would be saved. If he should fall in this, he should fall in a great and glorious cause, struggling not only for the Company, but for the people of Great Britain and India, for many, many millions of souls.

"What," he said, "is the end of all government? Certainly the happiness of the governed. Others may hold other opinions; but this is mine, and I proclaim it. What are we to think of a government whose good fortune is supposed to spring from the calamities of its subjects, whose aggrandisement grows out of the miseries of mankind? This is the kind government exercised under the East India Company upon the natives of Hindostan; and the subversion of that infamous government is the main object of the bill in question. But in the progress of accomplishing this end, it is objected that the charter

of the Company should not be violated ; and upon this point, sir, I shall deliver my opinion without disguise. A charter is a trust to one or more persons for some given benefit. If this trust be abused, if the benefit be not obtained, and its failure arises from palpable guilt, or (what in this case is fully as bad) from palpable ignorance or mismanagement, will any man gravely say, that trust should not be resumed and delivered to other hands ; more especially in the case of the East India Company, whose manner of executing this trust, whose laxity and langour produced, and tend to produce, consequences diametrically opposite to the ends of confiding that trust, and of the institution for which it was granted ? I beg of gentlemen to be aware of the lengths to which their arguments upon the intangibility of this charter may be carried. Every syllable virtually impeaches the establishment by which we sit in this House, in the enjoyment of this freedom, and of every other blessing of our government. These kind of arguments are batteries against the main pillar of the British constitution. Some men are consistent with their own private opinions, and discover the inheritance of family maxims, when they question the principles of the Revolution ; but I have no scruple in subscribing to the articles of that creed which produced it. Sovereigns are sacred, and reverence is due to every king ; yet, with all my attachments to the person of a just magistrate, had I lived in the reign of James the 2nd, I should most certainly have contributed my efforts, and borne part in those illustrious struggles which vindicated an empire from hereditary

servitude, and recorded this valuable doctrine—'That trust abused is revocable.'"

It was on this occasion that Burke pronounced the eloquent eulogium on his former disciple, his then friend and leader, which may still be accepted as Fox's enduring monument:—

“Having done my duty to the bill, let me say a word to the author. I should leave him to his own noble sentiments, if the unworthy and illiberal language with which he has been treated, beyond all example of parliamentary liberty, did not make a few words necessary; not so much in justice to him as to my own feelings. I must say then, that it will be a distinction honourable to the age, that the rescue of the greatest number of the human race that ever were so grievously oppressed, from the greatest tyranny that was ever exercised, has fallen to the lot of abilities and dispositions equal to the task; that it has fallen to one who has the enlargement to comprehend, the spirit to undertake, and the eloquence to support so great a measure of hazardous benevolence. His spirit is not owing to his ignorance of the state of men and things; he will know what snares are spread about his path, from personal animosity, from court intrigues, and possibly from popular delusion. But he has put to hazard his ease, his serenity, his interest, his power, even his darling popularity, for the benefit of a people whom he has never seen. This is the road that all heroes have trod before him. He is traduced and abused for his supposed motives. He will remember that obloquy is a necessary ingredient in the composition of all true glory; he will remember that it was not only in

the Roman customs, but it is in the nature and constitution of things, that calumny and abuse are essential parts of triumph. These thoughts will support a mind, which only exists for honour, under the burthen of temporary reproach. He is doing, indeed, a great good ; such as rarely falls to the lot, and almost as rarely coincides with the desires, of any man. Let him use his time. Let him give the whole length of the reins to his benevolence. He is now on a great eminence, where the eyes of mankind are turned to him. He may live long, he may do much ; but here is the summit. He never can exceed what he does this day.

“ He has faults ; but they are faults that, though they may in a small degree tarnish the lustre, and sometimes impede the march of his abilities, have nothing in them to extinguish the fire of great virtues. In those faults there is no mixture of deceit, of hypocrisy, of pride, of ferocity, of complexional despotism, or want of feeling for the distresses of mankind. His are faults which might exist in a descendant of Henry the 4th of France—as they did exist in that father of his country ; Henry the 4th wished that he might live to see a fowl in the pot of every peasant in his kingdom. That sentiment of homely benevolence was worth all the splendid sayings that are recorded of kings. But he wished perhaps for more than could be obtained, and the goodness of the man exceeded the power of the king. But this gentleman, a subject, may this day say this at least, with truth, that he secures the rice in his pot to every man in India. . . .

“ The Ganges and the Indus are the boundaries of the fame of my honourable friend. I confess I anticipate

with joy the reward of those whose whole consequence, power, and authority exist only for the benefit of mankind ; and I carry my mind to all the people, and all the names and descriptions that, relieved by this bill, will bless the labours of this Parliament ; and the confidence which the best House of Commons has given to him who the best deserves it. The little cavils of parties will not be heard where freedom and happiness will be felt. There is not a tongue, a nation, or religion in India, which will not bless the presiding care and manly beneficence of this House, and of him who proposes to you this great work. Your names will never be separated before the throne of the Divine Goodness, in whatever language, or with whatever rites pardon is asked for sin, and reward for those who imitate the Godhead in His universal bounty to His creatures. These honours you deserve, and they will surely be paid, when all the jargon of influence, and party, and patronage are swept into oblivion."

It seems presumptuous to offer an opinion in opposition to the dictum of such men as James Mill and Lord Macaulay, both of whom have strongly condemned the India Bill as handing over India to the will and caprice of a legislative assembly in which she was not represented, and as establishing abroad an *imperium in imperio*. But these objections would apply to the present system of imperial government, under which Parliament becomes, in all Indian questions, the final arbiter. The chief fault of the measure was its unnecessary interference with the commercial rights of the Company ; but had the Opposition pursued a patriotic policy, amendments

could easily have been introduced. As it was, the King and the King's friends, and the Tories, assisted by Pitt, raised a storm of popular indignation against the Ministry; and the Bill was thrown out in the House of Lords, on the 17th of December, by 95 votes to 76. Next day, the exultant King dismissed the Ministry,* and placed Pitt, as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, at the head of a new Cabinet.

The Court party shared in the royal jubilation; but the House of Commons resented the arbitrary exercise of the prerogative, by which a government possessing the confidence of the majority was made to give place to one selected from the ranks of the minority. It passed a series of strongly-worded resolutions, which reflected on the actions of the Crown. One of these may be quoted:—"That it is the opinion of the Committee that the late changes were preceded by extraordinary rumours, dangerous to the constitution, inasmuch as the sacred name of Majesty had been unconstitutionally † used for the purpose of affecting the deliberations of Parliament; and the appointments that followed were accompanied by circumstances new and extraordinary,

* "We are beat in the House of Lords," wrote Fox, "by such treachery on the part of the King, and such meanness on the part of his friends in the House of Lords, as one could not expect either from him or them." 'Memorials,' ii. 221.

† Earl Temple had been authorised by the King to intimate to the peers his desire that they should vote against his Government:—"His Majesty allows Earl Temple to say, that whoever voted for the India Bill was not only not his friend, but would be considered by him as an enemy; and if these words were not strong enough, Earl Temple might use whatever words he deemed stronger, and more to the purpose."—WRAXALL, 'Memoirs,' iv. 557 *et seq.*

and such as were evidently calculated not to conciliate the affections of that House." Though opposed by Pitt, Henry Dundas [Lord Melville], and Scott [Lord Eldon], it was carried by a majority of 54. Pitt, however, as leader of the new administration, firmly maintained his ground; and the support given to him by the King, added to his growing popularity in the country, enabled him to baffle the attacks of the Opposition, until he felt strong enough to dissolve Parliament, and appeal to the country. In the new House of Commons the tables were turned; Fox and his friends found themselves in a pitiful minority; and thenceforward, for several years, Pitt held almost undisputed possession of the reins of power.

Though in counties and boroughs the Whig candidates were rejected with alarming alacrity,* Fox secured his return for Westminster, after a struggle to which our electioneering history presents few parallels. The Court candidates were Sir Cecil Wray (a political rene-

* On the 11th of April, 1784, Horace Walpole writes:—"The scene is woefully changed for the Opposition, though not half the new parliament is yet chosen. Though they still contest a very few counties and some boroughs, they own themselves totally defeated. They reckoned themselves sure of 240 members; they probably will not have 150. In short, between the industry of the Court and the East India Company, and that momentary frenzy that sometimes seizes a whole nation, as if it were a vast animal, such aversion to the coalition, and such a detestation of Mr. Fox, have seized the country, that, even where omnipotent gold retains its influence, the elected pass through an ordeal of the most virulent abuse. The great Whig families, the Cavendishes, Rockinghams, Bedfords, have lost all credit in their own counties; nay, have been tricked out of seats where the whole property was their own: and, in some of these cases, a royal finger has too evidently tampered, as well as singularly and revengefully, towards Lord North and Lord Hertford."

gade) and Admiral Lord Hood ; and the most unscrupulous proceedings were adopted to ensure the defeat of the Whig chief. Lord Hood brought up a number of sailors, or ruffians dressed in sailors' clothes, who surrounded the hustings, paraded the streets, molested Fox's adherents, and exercised a kind of temporary terrorism, until the mob, who on this occasion sided with the Whigs, retaliated with considerable violence. The caricaturists were busy, and those of the Court heaped the vilest abuse not only on Fox, but on the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire (Georgiana), who was one of his most enthusiastic and successful canvassers. Of the nature of the prints and lampoons directed against her, it is difficult to give a specimen, on account of their coarseness and indecency. In one, published immediately after the election, entitled 'Every man has his hobby-horse,' Fox is carried in triumph on the back of the charming and undaunted Duchess. In the 'Morning Post' appeared such insults as the following :—"The Duchess of Devonshire yesterday canvassed the different alehouses of Westminster in favour of Mr. Fox ; about one o'clock she took her share of a pot of porter at Sam House's, in Wardour Street." Sam House, a publican, was one of Fox's steadiest supporters. She is represented as writing to the candidate :—"Yesterday I sent you three votes, but went through great fatigue to secure them ; it cost me *ten kisses* for every *plumper*. I'm much afraid *we are done up*,—we'll see you at the porter-shop, and consult about ways and means." It was said that, in one instance, she had bribed a butcher with a kiss to give his vote to Fox. The popular party retorted in a host of engrav-

ings, ballads, epigrams, and "posters"; but we can afford room only for a brief extract from a couple of ballads the second of which is entitled 'Paddy's Farewell to Sir Cecil.' It must be premised that Sir Cecil Wray, when in Parliament, had proposed a tax on maid-servants and advocated the abolition of Chelsea Hospital.

The first ballad-monger sings:—

"For though he oppose the stamping of notes,*
'Tis in order to tax all your petticoats.
Then how can a woman solicit our votes
For Sir Cecil Wray?

For had he to women been ever a friend,
Nor by taxing *them* tried our old taxes to mend,
Yet so *stingy* he is, that none can contend
For Sir Cecil Wray

Then come ev'ry free, ev'ry generous soul,
That loves a fine girl and a full flowing bowl,
Come here in a body, and all of you poll
'Gainst Sir Cecil Wray!

In vain all the arts of the Court are let loose,
The electors of Westminster never will choose
To run down a Fox and set up a *Goose*,
Like Sir Cecil Wray."

"Paddy," † is represented as singing:—

"Sir Cecil, be aisy, I won't be unshivil,
Now the Man of the People is chose in your stead;
From swate Covent Garden you're flung to the Divil,
By Jasus, Sir Cecil, you've boddered your head.

* A tax on receipts had been proposed by Fox.

† The Irish chairmen espoused Fox's side.

To be sure, much avail to you all your fine speeches,
 'Tis nought but palaver, my honey, my dear,
 While all Charley's voters stick to him like laiches,
 A frind to our liberties and our *small beer*. . . .

Ah ! now ! pray let no jontleman prissent take this ill,
 By my truth, Pat shall nivr use unshivil words ;
 But my verse sure must please, which the name of Sir Cecil
 Hands down to oblivion's latest records.

If myshelf with the tongue of a prophet is gifted,
 Oh ! I see in a twinkling the Knight's latter ind !
 Tow'nds the verge of his life div'lish high he'll be lifted,
 And after his death, never fear, he'll discind."

After a forty days' poll Fox was returned by a majority of 246 votes over Wray.* The High Bailiff, as returning officer, refused to declare the election, because a scrutiny had been demanded ; but the populace carried Fox in triumph to Devonshire House, where he was received by the Prince of Wales, the Duke and Duchess, and a large gathering of leading Whigs. The Prince, it may be added, had taken so deep an interest in the election as to ride through the streets, wearing Fox's colours, and a sprig of laurel in his hat.

When Parliament met, Fox took his seat as member for Kirkwall, for which borough he had also been returned. The Westminster election became the subject of debate, and on a motion against the scrutiny, which Pitt unwisely and ungenerously supported,† the Whig

* The numbers were: for Lord Hood, 6694 ; Mr. Fox, 6233 ; Wray, 5598.

† Lord Eldon said to Mr. Farrer :—" When the legality of the conduct of the High Bailiff was before the House, all the lawyers on the ministerial side defended his right to grant the scrutiny. I thought their law bad, and I told them so."—Twiss, 'Life of Lord Eldon,' i. 172.

chief delivered one of his most splendid speeches. The ministerial party, however, was not to be moved by argument, and a scrutiny was ordered. Eight months were spent upon it; very little real progress was made; and its single result was to revive the Whig leader's popularity, the public, not without reason, regarding him as the victim of persecution. In the session of 1785, a motion requiring the High Bailiff to make an immediate return was carried in spite of Pitt, who displayed throughout these proceedings an unworthy spirit of personal animosity. The High Bailiff then sent in the names of Lord Hood and Mr. Fox as highest on the poll; and the two members accordingly took their seats as members for Westminster.

III.

WE may turn for awhile from Fox in the House of Commons to Fox "at home." The graphic sketch of the swarthy-complexioned statesman drawn by Walpole is probably familiar to many of our readers. He describes him as lodging in St. James's Street, and says that as soon as he rose, which was very late, he held "a *levée* of his followers, and of the members of the gaming club at Brookes"—all his disciples. His bristly black person and shaggy breast quite open, and rarely purified by any ablutions, was wrapped in a foul linen night-gown, and his bushy hair dishevelled. In these Cynic weeds, and with Epicurean good humour, did he dictate his politics, and in this school did the Heir of the Crown attend his lessons and imbibe them." His nephew, Lord Holland, commenting on the Walpolian portrait, which he calls "a strong caricature," admits that it has much humour, and "I must needs acknowledge," he adds, "from my boyish recollection of a morning in St. James's Street, some truth to recommend it." Of Fox's "Epicurean good humour" the contemporary evidence is abundant, and it is certain that few party chiefs have ever been so warmly beloved by their followers. It sprang partly, perhaps, from his robust constitution, a constitution so strong that it was long before his irregularities could impair it, or the toils of parliamentary life break down its elasticity. It is

related of him that, when twenty-two years of age, he twice swam round the ice-cold mountain-tarn at Killarney, known as "the Devil's Punch-bowl." In later life he was capable of great physical exertion; and after a night spent in the House of Commons would ride to Newmarket, or sit down at the gaming-table, without the slightest symptom of fatigue.

Fox was something more, however, than a man of pleasure or a politician. In his home-life he was a fond and devoted husband, a genial host, a kind master, a faithful friend. His leisure hours, after the fall of the Coalition Ministry, he devoted to the study of the ancient classics and the masterpieces of French and Italian literature. Of the Latin poets he preferred Ovid; of the Greek tragedians, Euripides; of the ancient historians, Herodotus. We have already alluded to his love of the drama: of our old English poets he was an assiduous reader and a judicious critic. He wrote in English verse with much ease and correctness, and the following enigmas are attributed to his pen:—

I.

"My first does affliction denote,
Which my second is destined to feel;
My whole is the best antidote
That sorrow to soften and heal,"

II.

"Formed long ago, though made to-day,
I'm most employed when others sleep;
What few would wish to give away,
And none would ever wish to keep."

His prose was not so good; and this is characteristic of several great orators, as, for instance, of Chatham and

Gladstone. They seem to lose their power when they endeavour to commit their thoughts "to paper." Fox's unfinished 'History of England' is an unquestionable failure. Nowhere does the style warm into eloquence; nowhere does a fine thought or a happy illustration relieve the reader's weariness. It is the cold and correct effort of an ambitious schoolboy. Fox is seen to much greater advantage, notwithstanding occasional errors of taste and some hasty generalisation, in his letters and state-papers. These are always perspicuous, forcible, and unaffected. We shall extract from the former a few bits of artistic criticism and literary annotation.

Writing to his nephew, Henry Lord Holland, he says:—

"I will keep your books for you, nor do I know that there are any, except perhaps the 'Parnaso' [a collection of Spanish poems], that I shall beg of you. I have hitherto looked very little into them. I read one novel, 'El coçhero honroso,' which I thought very poor; one thing in Cadalso, 'La Violeta' [a prose satire], or some such name, which I like exceedingly; and 'Galatea' [a pastoral romance, by Cervantes], in which there are many pretty things, but not much genius. Cervantes's style in this, and, I think, in some other things, appears to me to be formed entirely upon Boccaccio, whom, by the way, I do not know that he anywhere mentions; and it appears to me to be forcible or affecting, or descriptive, precisely in proportion as it resembles its original. The poetry in 'Galatea' is, I think, generally rather flat, though in some places, particularly where he imitates the manner of Ariosto,

pleasant and easy . . . I do not wonder at your admiring the Bolognese school and Guercino particularly; but Mrs. A [mistead] will never forgive you, if you have not taken particular notice of his picture of Christ in the Garden, at Cento, which probably you saw in your way from Bologna to Venice, though you do not mention it. I think it by far the most pleasing of his works. I have been always partial to the Venetian painters, Titian and Tintoret, and I doubt whether there is any one picture upon the whole superior to the Martyrdom of St. Peter the Hermit.*

“To doubt about Correggio, seems to me just as if a man were to doubt about Homer, or Shakespeare, or Ariosto; and as to his imitators, whom you dislike so, who are they? Do you reckon Parmegiano one, and do you dislike him? His other principal imitators that I know, are Schidone, Baroccio, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, all of them, I think, very excellent painters. You seem to think (and in that I agree) that expression adapted to the subject is the first merit of a painter, and yet, by some strange difference of seeing I suppose from me, you prefer Guido to Domenichino, who, of all painters, excepting only Raphael, has this merit to the greatest degree.”

“I think the superiority of the Iliad [to the Odyssey] is greater than I had imagined, or than I believe is generally allowed, and more than makes up for the fable being so much less entertaining. To be sure the battles are too

* Fox refers to the celebrated picture of St. Peter Martyr, at Venice, burned a year or two ago. The words “the Hermit” are evidently a slip of the pen.

long, and the wounds too minutely described; but there is a charm in it which makes one read on with eagerness, and a rapidity and fire and freedom in the manner that surpasses all other poets . . . In short, the more I read the more I admire him."

"I have been reading Ariosto again, and I declare I like him better than ever. If I were to know but one language besides my own, it should be Italian."

"I have just begun Heliodorus, and like him very much; I have not quite finished the story of Enemon." [Heliodorus, the author of a romance entitled '*Æthiopica*,' flourished at the end of the fourth century.]

"If you will not read the *Iliad* regularly through, pray read the tenth book, or, at least, the first half of it. It is a part I never heard particularly celebrated, but I think the beginning of it more true in the description of the uneasiness in the Greek army, and the solicitude of the different chiefs, than anything almost in the poem. It is one of those things that one cannot give an idea of by any particular quotation, but which is excellent, beyond measure, in placing the scene exactly before one's eyes; and the characters, too, are remarkably well distinguished and preserved. I think Homer always happy in his accounts of Menelaus; remarkably so, you know, in the '*Odyssey*,' but I think he is so always, and in this place, too, particularly. You see I have never done with Homer; and, indeed, if there was nothing else, except Virgil and Ariosto, one should never want reading."

"I have just finished Horne Tooke [*'Diversions of Purley'*], and like it very much indeed; my opinion of

his abilities is much raised, for I did not use to hold him high in any other respect except wit and some humour."

"How can you, who read Juvenal, talk of Demosthenes being difficult? difficult or not, you must read him, and read him with the view (which you probably did not before) of considering how far his manner of putting things can be introduced with success into Parliamentary debate."

"I am very glad you are reading Euripides, but I had rather you had begun almost any other play than the *Hippolytus*, and I meant, if I had not forgot it, particularly to have recommended the *Heraclida* to you. Of all Euripides' plays, I think it the one most below its reputation . . . The *Cyclops*, in a style of its own, is very well worth reading. It is so Shaksperic. The worst of all, I think, is *Andromache*."

"You have hardly seen the new edition of Burns. Currie's life of him is the most affected thing I ever read, and in some parts (particularly where he speaks of his drunkenness, an odd subject to be pompous upon) pompous to a degree of ridicule. Some of Burns's things are admirable,* particularly 'Tam O'Shanter.' The 'Cotter's Saturday Night' is very good, too. It seems strange, but I think it is so, that the Scotch should excel in pastoral."

"The History goes on very slowly . . . I have been a good deal diverted from it this last fortnight by a rage I have taken for looking over all Dryden's works,

* 'Tam O'Shanter' was written in 1788; 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' in 1785.

both prose and poetry. I fell into it with real diligent views in regard to history, but soon forgot the object, and read him with views entirely critical. I mean, some day or other, to publish an edition of Dryden." *

After Fox's marriage to an accomplished woman [Mrs. Armistead], whom, unfortunately, her previous life prevented him from introducing into society, he gave up his irregular habits, and retiring to St. Anne's, Chertsey, occupied his leisure in the literary pursuits to which he was so partial. There he loved to receive his friends, and there he delighted them not less by the fresh flavour of his conversation than by his fervour of heart and kindness of disposition. † Everybody knows the inscription on the grave-stone of the accomplished Elizabethan courtier and statesman,—“Here lies Fulke Greville, servant to Queen Elizabeth, counsellor to King James, and *friend to Sir Philip Sydney*.” But everybody does *not* know that a similar proclamation of an honourable friendship may be read on the monument of Lord John Townshend, who is ennobled as “*the friend and com-*

* Fox's admiration of “glorious John,” was so excessive that he would not use in his ‘History’ any word that was not to be found in Dryden. This partiality may, perhaps, have been derived from Burke. Mr. Horner remarks:—“I heard Mr. Fox, speaking of Burke, say that the coincidence was quite surprising between the arguments, declamations, and even the very expressions, of Salmasius against Milton, and Burke's upon the Revolution. He did not say Burke had taken from Salmasius; but he disclaimed making the charge as if he thought it might be made with considerable probability. Dryden's prose, he said, was Burke's great favourite. He seems to copy him more than he does any other writer.”—‘Memoirs and Correspondence,’ i. 348.

† “In general society,” says Wilberforce, “Fox was quiet and unassuming.”—*Life*, p. 412.

panion of Mr. Fox," a distinction which was the pride of his life, and the only one he was desirous might be recorded after his death. What more striking testimony can be desired to the attractiveness of the great statesman's character?

How delightful, says Lord Stanhope, must Fox have been as a companion! How frank, how rich, how varied his flow of conversation! And no doubt it was a pleasure and a privilege to visit him in his delightful river-side retreat, and to sit by his side beneath the cedars that he planted at St. Anne's.* With what pleasant humour the world-worn statesman would at such times make a jest of his brief lapses into utter idleness! Once, when Rogers said that it was delightful to lie on the grass all day with a book in one's hand, Fox silyly answered, "Yes; but why with a book?" How genial his aspect, as Lord Stanhope describes it from a friend's recollection, when, walking slow, and with gouty feet, along his garden-alleys, but with a cheerful countenance and joyous tones, he expanded his ample breast to draw in the fresh breeze, and exclaimed from time to time, "Oh, how fine a thing is life!" "Oh, how glorious a thing is summer weather!" He had a keen relish for the sweet sights and sounds of nature;

* "Mr. Greville notes in his journal, under date of January 22nd, 1833, a dinner with Talleyrand, "after which he told me about his first residence in England and his acquaintance with Fox and Pitt. He always talks in a kind of affectionate tone about the former, and is now meditating a visit to Mrs. Fox at St. Anne's Hill, where he may see her surrounded with the busts, pictures, and recollections of her husband. He delighted to dwell on the simplicity, gaiety, childishness, and profoundness of Fox."—*Greville Memoirs*, ii. 344, 345.

and luxuriated in the delights of a bright June day, or a fragrant April morning, with "a sweet westerly wind, a beautiful sun, all the thorns and elms just budding, and the nightingales just beginning to sing." In one of his letters he exclaims,—“If ever there was a place that might be called the seat of true happiness, St. Anne's is that place.”* Lord Stanhope thinks that Fox's familiar correspondence, which Lord Russell has edited, does not tend on the whole to exalt his fame. We do not agree with Lord Stanhope; for it certainly does not fail to raise our estimate of Fox as a man. It brings into full relief all the fine qualities of his character, his hatred of oppression, his unaffected love of liberty, his sympathy with whatever was noble and

* St. Anne's Hill rises about one mile west of Chertsey, and on the south-east side stands St. Anne's House, the residence of Fox for some happy years. It was purchased by Mrs. Fox, in 1795, before her marriage to the statesman. The entrance to his favourite arbour-seat is marked by a pedestal, surmounted by a vase, which Mrs. Fox erected. A tablet bears as an inscription a couple of lines from Dryden's modernization of Chaucer's 'The Flower and the Leaf,'—

“The painted birds, companions of the spring,
Hopping from spray to spray, were heard to sing.”

And the following stanzas :—

“Cheerful in this sequestered bower,
From all the storms of life remov'd,
Here Fox enjoyed his evening hour,
In converse with the friends he lov'd.
And here these lines he oft would quote,
Pleas'd from his favourite poet's lay,
When challenged by the warbler's note,
There breathed a song from every spray.”

true and generous, his sweetness of temper, his wide and varied culture,—in short, all that made him what he was, and all for which his contemporaries and posterity have been greatly willing, not only to forgive, but to forget his errors.

IV.

THE period of Fox's political career extending from 1784 to 1801, may be summarily described as a prolonged opposition to the ministry of Pitt.* Never has the House of Commons witnessed a more brilliant struggle than that which night after night took place between the two great rivals. It was observed that Fox never spoke so well as when he had to answer one of Pitt's best speeches; and that Pitt never did himself so much justice as when he knew that Fox would follow him. Wilberforce declared that their powers were so equal, that, in spite of his own judgment, he generally felt inclined to side with the orator who spoke last. Fox was not slow to own the excellence of Pitt as a speaker; and Bishop Tomline says that Pitt considered Fox far superior to any other of his opponents as a debater in the House of Commons. But to follow in detail the various stages of the contest would be foreign to the purpose of these pages, and would involve us in a task better suited to the parliamentary historian than to the

* With the exception of a few months in 1798-1800 when Fox retired from all participation in the House of Commons debates, owing to the immense preponderance of the Tory majority. His motion for the repeal of certain acts against sedition and treason, of an oppressive character, was rejected by 260 votes against 52 (May 23rd, 1798); and Charles Grey's, for leave to bring in a bill to reform the representation of the people, by 149 against 91. The secession of the leaders of the Opposition was the subject of many caricatures.

biographer. The principal incidents to be singled out are the prosecution of Warren Hastings, in which, as we have seen, Fox was appointed one of the managers of the impeachment; his contest with the Minister on the Regency Bill; his indefatigable exertions to secure the abolition of the Slave Trade; his urgent efforts on behalf of financial reform and economy; and his steadfast hostility to the war-budgets and war-measures of Pitt. His conduct on the Regency Bill can scarcely be defended; it would seem to have been governed by his pledges to the Prince of Wales rather than by his usual political sagacity. The position he took up was not a Whig position; would never have been taken up by a Somers or a Walpole; and was a surprising position for so fervid and steadfast an enemy of what he aptly called "royalism." He stated that, in his opinion, the Prince of Wales had as clear and express a *right* to assume the reins of Government, and exercise the power of sovereignty, during the illness and incapacity of the King, as if the King's demise had taken place. Sensible of his error, he afterwards modified this statement, but even in a modified form it was indefensible. Certain it is that the Prince of Wales had deserved from him no such sacrifice of principle. Not long before, he had concealed from his "dear Charles" the secret of his marriage (in 1785) to Mrs. Fitzherbert, the Roman Catholic lady whom he could purchase on no other terms, and had allowed him to assert in the House of Commons (April 30th, 1787), on "direct authority," that no such marriage had been accomplished. Within four-and-twenty hours of this declaration, however, Fox found that he had been deceived. Then, to consum-

mate his treachery, the Prince would fain have had Charles Grey inform the House that Mr. Fox had exceeded his instructions and mistaken his meaning. This to Fox he was afraid to say; neither dared he ask him to withdraw or qualify what he had uttered on written authority. Finally, he allowed Mrs. Fitzherbert to believe that Fox had invented the calumny which represented her as the mistress of the Prince, and not his wife;* and from that day forth the supposed slanderer was never admitted into her presence. For a time Fox's resentment was profound; but eventually his easy temper and the Prince's blandishments prevailed, and at the close of the following year (1788), he flung aside his party traditions, contending for the Prince's right to the Regency with uncontrolled power, and speaking of him personally in terms which were certainly undeserved.

The leading principles and the chief measures of which Fox was the consistent advocate have been pointed out by Earl Russell. He held with admirable consistency the doctrine,—a doctrine now accepted by statesmen of both parties,—that the King should always be guided by the advice of Parliament; repudiating the idea of Bolingbroke, which George the 3rd adopted, that he could set aside party connection, disregard the opinion of the Parliamentary majority, and rule by separate influence and by innate authority. Second, he maintained

* Mr. Langdale says that the Prince went up to Mrs. Fitzherbert the day after Fox had made his statement, and, taking hold of both her hands and caressing her, said, "Only conceive, Maria, what Fox did yesterday; he went down to the House, and denied that you and I were man and wife."

that a man's religious belief ought not to disqualify him for office, or for a seat in Parliament. And though he did not live to see Protestant Dissenters relieved from the oppression of the Test and Corporation Acts,* or Roman Catholics from the operation of the penal statutes of Charles the 2nd, yet by his noble exertions he largely contributed to the future triumph of those measures of freedom and toleration. Third, the African Slave Trade, which Mr. Pitt both denounced and extended, received its death-blow from the hands of Fox just as his career approached its termination. Fourth, of Parliamentary Reform he was the unwavering and unwearied advocate. Fifth, he was persevering in his advocacy of economy in the public expenditure. Sixth, he constantly protested against encroachments on the liberty of the Press. And, lastly, in middle age as in youth, he was the champion of Peace. Yet not of peace at any price, or at all times. He supported Mr. Pitt, when, in 1787, on the attempt of France to overthrow the independence of Holland, the Minister vigorously interfered in its defence. Again, when Napoleon, after the Battle of Austerlitz, threatened the liberties of Europe, he preferred the continuance of war to humiliation and disgrace. While he sympathised with the French Revolution, so far as it represented the revolt of the people against feudal tyranny, he condemned its excesses.

* These oppressive acts Bishop Tomline, in his 'Life of Pitt,' describes as "the firmest bulwarks of the British Constitution." Lord Eldon thought the bill for repealing them "a revolutionary bill." Lord North spoke of the Test Act as "the great bulwark of the Constitution, to which we owed those inestimable blessings of freedom which we now happily enjoyed." On the other hand, Fox supported every motion for their repeal.

Still at heart he sighed, like Falkland, for "peace—peace—peace!" His desire for a just and honourable peace was not to be overpowered by the passionate arrogance which led England to assert an unrighteous dominion over America; nor by the mingled fear, pride, and jealousy which unhappily induced her to support and encourage the invasion and desolation of France as a punishment for the crimes of the Revolutionary Terrorists. "This disposition," says Earl Russell, "left him in a small minority in the House of Commons at the beginning of the American war, in a still smaller minority at the commencement and during the course of the French war. The loss of all prospect of power, the invectives of vulgar politicians, he was content to bear; the loss of friends, dearly loved, and of the national confidence, honourably acquired, were sacrifices more painful to his heart. But he never faltered, and never swerved from his purpose;" and that justice which his contemporaries denied him, posterity has been glad to concede, recognising in him a true statesman, chivalrous, honourable, earnest, and devoted to the best interests of his country.

In February, 1801, Pitt resigned on the Catholic Emancipation question, and was succeeded by the Speaker of the House of Commons, Mr. Addington, familiarly known as "the Doctor," a man without pretension to political capacity. Pitt's liberal views with respect to the repeal of the disabilities under which the Roman Catholics laboured, brought him nearer to Fox; and the two united their forces against the Addington

ministry. They concurred, moreover, in supporting the Peace of Amiens, that peace of which everybody was glad and nobody proud ; so that Fox shrewdly observed that the joy manifested by the public proved that they had been so distressed by the war as to be glad to accept peace on any terms.* The rupture of this treaty, which again involved England in the continental turmoil, he at first denounced ; but he afterwards seems to have felt that resistance had become necessary to the ambition and aggression of Napoleon,—to have become convinced that peace was no longer compatible with the preservation of English freedom. “Every other monument of European liberty has perished,” said Sir James Mackintosh ; “that ancient fabric which has been gradually raised by the wisdom and virtue of our forefathers still stands ; but it stands alone, and it stands among ruins !” At one with Pitt on this all-important point, as on the question of Catholic Emancipation, when the fall of the Addington Government recalled Pitt to power, there was nothing to have prevented Fox from joining him ; in which case the country, as Lord Grenville said, would have gained the full benefit of the services of all those who, by the public voice and sentiment, were judged most capable of contributing to its prosperity and safety. But the King’s prejudice against Fox was not to be overcome ; and Lord Grenville, Wyndham, and the other Whig chiefs, refused to take office without him. Pitt, therefore, was left almost alone—his only able

* After the peace of Amiens, Fox, accompanied by Lord and Lady Holland, visited Paris, and was received with much distinction by the First Consul.

colleagues being Canning and Castlereagh—at the most critical juncture which Great Britain has experienced. The victory of Trafalgar saved the country from the peril of invasion. On the other hand, Napoleon's triumph at Austerlitz broke up the European coalition on which Pitt had rested his hopes of success, and crushed our two strongest allies, Austria and Russia. "Austerlitz," said Wilberforce, "killed Pitt." Exhausted, and in feeble health, he was unable to sustain the blow. He died on the 26th of January, 1806.

On the death of Pitt, it was admitted by all parties that Fox must be the principal person in any new Administration; and the King was compelled to give way. A junction was formed between Fox, with his immediate followers,* the Grenville section, and the Tories under Lord Sidmouth; and the Whig chief took the seals as Secretary of State, while Grenville was appointed First Lord of the Treasury. The new Ministry set to work with great energy. They introduced and carried a measure for limiting the period of service in the army; their budget was based upon economical principles; they effected some reforms in the system of recruitment; and brought forward proposals for abolish-

* "Nothing can exceed the cordiality, reasonableness, and moderation, with which the whole progress of the arrangement has been conducted on both sides. Whoever knows Mr. Fox at all, needs no authority as to him; he is in every respect most perfectly satisfied with Lord Grenville."—F. HORNER, *'Memoirs and Correspondence,'* i. 358. The coalition was natural enough; Fox aware of the King's hostility to him, was glad to secure the assistance of the King's friends, and Addington, bitterly opposed to Canning and the Pittites, necessarily turned to Fox and Grenville.

ing the African slave-trade, and removing the Roman Catholic disabilities. The former was carried; the latter had to bide its time. Abroad, they discontinued Pitt's system of continental alliances and foreign subsidies; while no less resolute in carrying on the war which Napoleon had forced upon them. Yet, patriotic and vigorous as the Government appeared in all its proceedings, it was but coldly supported by the nation, while the King held it in but little favour.* They were ridiculed under the designation of "All the Talents," and as the "broad-bottomed" Ministry, the popular dislike to coalitions being still prevalent. The caricaturists, especially Gillray, who, with all his cleverness, caught only the froth of public opinion, launched at them the stinging arrows of their ridicule. Some negotiations for peace which Napoleon had initiated, but with obvious insincerity, were burlesqued in a print, entitled 'Pacific Overtures; or, a Flight from St. Cloud's "over the water to Charlie,"' which cast upon Fox a wholly unmerited reproach. The weary statesman, who was suffering from the inroads of disease, having declared in debate that his place was not a bed of roses, Gillray brought out a caricature, 'Comforts of a Bed of Roses; *vide*, Charles's elucidation of Lord Castlereagh's speech!—a Nightly Scene near Cleveland Row,' in which Fox and his wife are seen asleep in bed, while Napoleon attacks the slumbering Minister. The ghost of Pitt arouses him with the words:—"Awake!

* "The King and his household were, from the beginning and throughout, hostile to the Ministry."—LORD HOLLAND, 'Memoirs of the Whig Party,' ii. 68.

awake! or be for ever fallen!" On the other hand, the royal prejudice against Fox began to abate under the influence of his sagacious moderation and deferential manner. The King afterwards acknowledged that though Mr. Fox had certainly been forced upon him, he had never presumed upon that circumstance to treat his Sovereign like a person in his power; but had always conducted himself frankly and yet respectfully, as it became a subject to behave. "His manner," said the King, "contrasted remarkably with that of another of the Whig Ministers, who, when he came into office, walked up to me in the way I should have expected from Bonaparte after the Battle of Austerlitz."

But the time was fast approaching when neither the royal favour, nor the applause of senates, nor the clamour of the populace could be of any importance to Charles Fox. It was observed by the watchful eye of affection that he exhibited unusual signs of fatigue when he attended the funeral of Lord Nelson in St. Paul's Cathedral (January 9th, 1806). As the weeks passed on, his vigour, his appetite, and even his spirits were perceptibly impaired. Symptoms of dropsy could not be disregarded. His colleagues, desirous of relieving him of the burden of attendance in the House of Commons, proposed to him a peerage; but at an early period of his career he had determined never to accept that political euthanasia. Though his illness soon confined him to the house, and latterly to his bed, he still attended to his official duties. In the intervals, and at night, after his visitors and secretaries had retired, he listened with eagerness to the reading of his

wife, or his niece, or nephew. The books which he chose were generally novels; but he showed a strong interest in Crabbe's 'Parish Register,' the manuscript of which had been sent to him by the poet. He conversed occasionally upon political subjects. It was, however, with manifest reluctance that in his last days he suffered them to occupy his time. His disorder increasing, the operation of tapping became necessary.* He submitted to it with perfect composure, after giving directions about his will, and explaining his hopes and wishes in reference to a public provision for his wife in the event of his death. At first the operation gave him relief, and for a few days he seemed to revive. Advantage was taken of this improvement to remove him to Chiswick. The weather was fine; and the garden through which he was wheeled, and the pictures, and spacious apartments of the Duke of Devonshire's magnificent mansion, evidently refreshed his spirits. Bacon's remark that poetry, sculpture, painting, and all the imitative arts, relieved and soothed the mind in sickness, while other occupations harassed and fatigued it, impressed him strongly. No doubt, as Lord Holland observes, he

* We may here quote a characteristic passage from Wilberforce's Diary, (under the date of June 27th, 1806):—"William Smith with us after the House, and talking of poor Fox constrainedly, when at last, overcome by his feelings, he burst out with a real divulging of his danger—dropsy. Poor fellow, how melancholy his case! He has not one religious friend! How poor a master the world! No sooner grasps his long-sought object than it shows itself a bubble, and he is forced to give it up. . . I quite love Fox for his generous and warm fidelity to the Slave Trade cause. Even very lately, when conscious that he would be forced to give up parliament for the session at least, he said, 'he wished to go down to the House once more to say something on the Slave Trade.'"—*Life*, p. 275.

applied it to his own situation. After some reflection, he observed that he could not see the reason of it, but acknowledged the truth. He found that he was invigorated by employing the mind in the contemplation of a landscape or the perusal of a poem ; while exertion in business, public or private, was wearisome.

The improvement did not long continue ; and the invalid was compelled to undergo a second operation. So ill was he on the 7th of September, that Mrs. Fox sent for Lord Holland, who remained at Chiswick until all was over. One day the dying statesman required his nephew to tell him the truth as to his condition ; and when informed that it was very precarious, expressed no surprise or concern, but turned his thoughts to the loss his wife would sustain. "You will not forget poor Liz," he said ; "what will become of her?" This occurred on the 11th of September. In the course of the next thirty-six hours he spoke frequently, and it was evident that he retained his faculties unimpaired ; but owing to alternate attacks of lethargy and restlessness, he was unable to support any continuous conversation. At his wife's request, a young clergyman read prayers, according to the beautiful form of the Church ; Mr. Fox, it was observed, keeping unusually silent. Towards the close, Mrs. Fox knelt on the bed, and joined his hands ; an action which drew from him a smile of indescribable sweetness, a smile of serenity, goodness, and affection.

From the morning of the 13th of September hope was abandoned. For the last two hours of his existence his articulation was so painful and indistinct, that those

who watched beside him—and they were many—could catch his words only occasionally, and but a few at a time. The last which he uttered with any degree of distinctness were, “I die happy,” and “Liz,” the affectionate abbreviation by which he usually addressed his wife. Something more he would have said; but no one could accurately syllable the whispered sounds. A few minutes after this final effort, and at eventide, he expired without a groan, his countenance preserving to the last a wonderful expression of peace and calmness.*

Fox enjoyed life; and, notwithstanding his grievous errors, even his severest critics would be unwilling to say that, on the whole, he misspent it. His services in the cause of civil and religious freedom must be allowed, by the most rigorous moralist, to outweigh the irregularities which marked his earlier career. He lived in a time when the ethical standard of society was very low; when the Church herself condoned in her rulers and her priests failings, follies, aye, and excesses, which nowadays would draw down upon them the strongest condemnation. A great man is rarely better than his age; and in Fox's case we are bound to make allowance for the unfortunate impulse given to him at the outset, by the

* “Fox is now no more. It has been a painful anxious week, for after all had been given over, there was a strange renovation that deluded us, in spite of our despair. It is a cruel disappointment, if one thinks of the hopes so recently indulged, and a cheerless prospect forward. The giant race is extinct; and we are left in the hands of little ones, whom we know to be diminutive, having measured them against the others.”—HORNER ‘Memoirs,’ i. 397.

loose example and unwise indulgence of his father. It may be affirmed, perhaps, with justice, that his virtues were all his own; his vices the unhappy product of circumstances to which he was unable to rise superior.

Fox sleeps beneath the roof of Westminster Abbey,*—close by the side of his great rival.† The reader will not forget that this propinquity of the graves of the two illustrious statesmen has suggested to Sir Walter Scott one of the happiest passages in his 'Marmion.' ‡

* He was buried on the 16th of October. "I attended the funeral," says Romilly, "as one of the mourners. Nothing could be more solemn and affecting. It was very numerously attended, and most of the persons present seemed as if they had lost a most intimate, and a most affectionate friend."—'Memoirs,' ii. 164.

† We may venture to recall to the reader Byron's lines in 'The Age of Bronze':—

"We, we have seen the intellectual race
Of giants stand, like Titans, face to face—
Athos and Ida, with a dashing sea
Of eloquence between, which flow'd all free,
As the deep billows of the Ægean war
Betwixt the Hellenic and the Phrygian shore,
But where are they—the rivals! a few feet
Of sullen earth divide each winding sheet."

‡ The passage beginning:—

Where—taming thought to human pride!—
The mighty chiefs sleep side by side,
Drop upon Fox's grave the tear,
'Twill trickle to his rival's bier;
O'er Pitt's the mournful requiem sound,
And Fox's shall the notes rebound.

The solemn echo seems to cry—
"Here let their discord with them die;
Speak not for those a separate doom,
Whom fate made brothers in the tomb;
But search the land of living men,
Where wilt thou find their like again?"

BOOK V.
WILLIAM PITT.



A.D. 1759-1806.

[The authorities available for the life of Fox are available also, in the main, for the life of his great rival. In addition, we have consulted Earl Stanhope's elaborate biography, *The Life of the Right Honourable William Pitt* (4 vols., ed. 1861); John Gifford, *Life of William Pitt* (3 vols., 4to, 1809); Tomline, Bishop of Winchester, *Memoirs of William Pitt* ("the worst biographical work of its size in the world"); *The Life of William Wilberforce*, by his Sons; the Duke of Buckingham, *Courts and Cabinets of George the 3rd*; *Diaries of Lord Colchester* (Abbot, formerly Speaker of the House of Commons); *Diaries and Correspondence of the First Earl of Malmesbury* (ed. 1844); *Memoirs and Correspondence of the Marquis of Londonderry* (ed. 1848); John Adolphus, *History of England from the Accession of George the 3rd*; *The Annual Register* (v. y.); Lord Brougham, *Statesmen of the Time of George the 3rd* (ed. 1845); Horace Twiss, *Public and Private Life of Lord Chancellor Eldon* (ed. 1844); Lord Campbell, *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*; Lord Holland, *Memoirs of the Whig Party*; Sir G. Cornewall Lewis, *Essays on the Administrations of Great Britain*; Sir T. Erskine May, *Constitutional History of England* (edit. 1861); *Spirit of the Public Journals, 1803-4*; *The Anti-Jacobin*; Goldwin Smith, *Three English Statesmen* (ed. 1867), etc. etc.]

Born at Hayes, in Kent, May, 28th, 1759	December 18th, 1783
Enters Pembroke Hall, University of Cambridge, 1773	Introduces and carries his India Bill, 1784
Called to the bar, 1780	Contest on the Regency Bill, 1788
Elected M.P. for Appleby, 1780	War with France, 1793
Delivers his first speech, February 20th, 1781	Resigns Office, February, 1801
Made Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1781	A second time Premier, May, 1804
Becomes First Minister, De-	His death, January, 1806

WILLIAM PITT.

A.D. 1759-1806.

I.

Of the two great Party-leaders who, for so considerable a period of the reign of George the 3rd, divided the suffrages of the English people, it may with truth be said that they were *magis pares, quam similes*. Though at first standing side by side in the political arena, they were opposed to each other, not only in views of public policy and in their principles of statesmanship, but in physical characteristics, in genius, temperament, their mode of life, and their style of oratory. The contrast is curious and instructive ; as might be expected, it is not wholly to the advantage of either. If Pitt outshone his rival in morality of conduct, he was certainly his inferior in intellectual power. But that two such men should at the same time be found to guide the national councils, and that they should be surrounded by so many scarcely

second to them in mental endowments, by Sheridan, and Windham, and Barré, by Canning and Tierney, by Wedderburn, Lee, Dundas, Scott, and Thurlow, is a remarkable illustration of the strength and fertility of the English race.

Pitt and Fox differed, to begin with, in the conditions under which they entered upon a public career. The hereditary prejudices which attended the one were, as Lord Brougham remarks, not less unfavourable than the prepossessions derived from his father's character and renown were auspicious to the entrance of the other upon the theatre of public affairs. Fox's father, as we have seen, had no following, no influence, and no popularity; whereas the name of Chatham had a spell which the public mind willingly acknowledged. His son succeeded to an ample inheritance of gratitude and affection; and at the very threshold of his public life seemed invested, so to speak, with the lustre of his father's genius and elevated patriotism. A not less conspicuous difference attended the after career of the two statesmen. Fox held office only at intervals, and altogether for only a short period; he was never First Minister. Pitt was seldom in Opposition; and ruled the country as premier, almost without control, for nearly twenty years. Fox was at the head of a small and divided party, unpopular in the country, and with scarcely any influence in either House of Parliament. Pitt commanded a large, a compact, an almost overwhelming majority, which had the support of the Crown as well as the confidence of the nation.

The contrast between the two rivals extended, as we have said, to their external characteristics. We have

described the burly frame, the "rude health" (until impaired by irregularities of life), the easy fascinating manners, and the frank open countenance of the great Whig leader. Pitt was of a delicate constitution; tall and slender in person; in his demeanour reserved and even frigid. Wraxall says of him that he seemed never to invite approach or to encourage acquaintance, though he could at times be polite, communicative, and even gracious. While Fox was always accessible to his friends and followers, Pitt, from the instant he entered the doorway of the House of Commons, advanced up the floor with a firm quick step, his head erect and thrown back, looking neither to the right nor to the left, and refusing to favour with any sign of recognition his most devoted adherents. Morally, the contrast was in Pitt's favour. He had profited by his father's example of purity, by the healthy atmosphere in which his early years had been spent. It is true that having been accustomed in his youth to take large quantities of port wine * as a remedy for his constitutional feebleness, he remained through life too partial to the bottle; but he was wholly free from the serious failings which the biographer has to lament in Charles James Fox. †

To compare the two statesmen as orators is necessarily

* At the recommendation of the family physician, Dr. Addington. Lord Stanhope says it was a remedy which at that time he took with manifest advantage; but the ultimate effect must have been injurious.

† It is significant of the prevailing laxity that Pitt's decorum of life was actually imputed to him as a fault. The jests which it drew from the Whig satirists are mostly unfit for quotation. Their nature may be inferred from the following verse in a song by that Bacchanalian lyricist, Captain Morris:—

a difficult task. True eloquence is the natural outcome of the orator's genius, character, disposition, and objects. It is influenced by all that he is and all that he wishes to be. Culture and practice may make a rhetorician or a debater; but the orator must find in himself the fire and force which he infuses into his speech. Speaking broadly, we should say that Fox was an orator, and Pitt a rhetorician. The former was spontaneous, genuine, self-communicative; the latter, artificial, elaborate, and unsympathetic. Lord Stanhope says that Fox would have been unquestionably the first orator of his age had it not been for Pitt; and that Pitt would have been unquestionably the first orator of his age had it not been for Fox. This is epigrammatic, but it seems to us incorrect. We are disposed to place the Whig leader above his competitor, just as we should place Fox himself below Chatham. The remark of Windham, that Pitt always seemed to him as if he could make a King's speech off-hand, points to a grave defect in his oratorical method. It suffered from an excess of dignity, from a frigid stateliness, from an over carefulness of phrase and deficiency of sentiment. The speaker's entire deficiency of imagination (in which he contrasted so remarkably with his illustrious father), was visible in the absence of appropriate illustration and figurative expression. The sole ornament he allowed himself was a quotation from

“The squires, whose reason ne'er reaches a span,
Are all with this prodigy struck, sir;
And cry, “It's a shame not to vote for a man
Who's as chaste as a baby at suck, sir.”

a Latin poet ; always felicitous in its appositeness.* The great peculiarity of his eloquence was its marvellous fluency ; a calm and liquid flow, possible only to a statesman of coldly serene temper. We meet with none of those passages of magnificent declamation, of passionate apostrophe and scathing invective, which adorn the speeches of Chatham ; none of those outburst of deep pathos or exuberant humour, and those lofty appeals to first principles, which embellish the speeches of Fox ; none of those luxuriant amplifications and rich effusions of copious fancy which are so frequent in the speeches of Burke. All is regular equable, unbroken, and lucid. Who can fail to admire, however, the admirable clearness of statement, the elevated character of diction, the distinctness of method, the forcibleness of reasoning which are always present ? Who but must acknowledge the force of sarcasm which is occasionally employed with so much effect, and yet without interrupting the general evenness, the lofty repose of the whole ? We can well believe, from a perusal of Pitt's orations, that his contemporaries did not exaggerate when they compared his deportment and bearing in debate to those of Marlborough in the field. If he descended into the arena it was as an acknowledged chief rather than as a combatant. It was for him to ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm. His courage was invincible, but it was without fire or passion, deriving nothing from the ebullitions

"Of mounting spirits, or fermenting blood."

* As in his citation from Statius applied to the execution of Louis the 16th.

He never lost his self-possession ; no tempest of opposition could shake his firmness.

Such qualifications as we have indicated must necessarily place their possessor in the first class of orators, but not indisputably foremost in that class. For they imply a monotony of manner and matter which could not be otherwise than a grave defect. Pitt said all he had to say in nearly the same way, in the same "state paper style," with the same nicely balanced periods and measured phraseology. Hence it came to pass, as Lord Brougham remarks, that the speaker was never forgotten in his speech, the artist never lost in his work. He was not without earnestness and sincerity, but he spoke from the mind rather than the heart. So, while moved to admire the flood of well-chosen language, and to wonder at the consummate skill with which the argument was managed, the listener always remembered that a first-rate artist was before him, was arranging an ably-contrived exhibition ; that he was gazing "upon a wonderful performer" indeed, but still upon a performer. Yet it may be admitted that, as Sir Robert Grant observes, every part of his speaking, in sentiment, in language, and in delivery, evidently bore the stamp of his character, communicating a definite and varied apprehension of the qualities of "strenuousness without bustle, unlaboured intrepidity, and severe greatness."* But even when this has been said, we must refuse to agree with Mr. Gifford that "it combined the eloquence of Tully with the energy of Demosthenes." As far as we can judge from the few specimens that have descended

* Quarterly Review, iv. 268, 269.

to us, it is to Isocrates that Mr. Pitt may more reasonably be likened.

As a statesman we shall have ample opportunity of judging him in the course of the following pages ; but it seems desirable to point out that he carried his love of place and power further than even Walpole did ; that it led him to make the grievous error of sacrificing his honourable engagements with Ireland to the prejudices of the King ; that it afterwards recalled him to office when he could hold it with no credit to himself nor advantage to his country. Whether it operated, as with Walpole, to induce him to shrink from colleagues his equals in ability, or whether the feebleness of his Ministry was due to causes beyond his control, it is certain that he bred up no great school of politicians, and that, with the exception of Canning and Thurlow, he rallied to his side no men of first-rate capacity. Dundas, his most trusted friend, was an effective business-like speaker and a good administrator, but had no claim whatever to a high place among the statesmen and orators of his age. Pitt's love of power and glory was, at all events, the source of his greatest errors. We must ascribe to it his persecution of the reformers who had at one time been coadjutors of his own,* and his unfortunate vacillation of conduct with respect to the slave-trade.† It explains why he

* Our political history presents few more melancholy spectacles than that of Pitt in the witness-box, on the trial of Major Cartwright, bearing witness against the principles of Reform he had formerly advocated. But on this we shall touch hereafter.

† "No man felt more strongly on the subject of the African Slave Trade than he; and all who heard him are agreed that his speeches against it were the finest of his noble orations [particularly the speech delivered in

who entered public life as an enthusiastic Whig died a Tory.

In private life Pitt is described as having been singularly amiable, and as cheering the social gathering by his buoyancy and even playfulness of mood. His conversation, when in the company of his chosen friends, was pleasantly marked by ease and vivacity. His sweetness and evenness of temper never gave way under all the trials of ill-health and adverse fortune. His integrity was above suspicion, his truthfulness never questioned; and upon him may be bestowed the greatest of all eulogiums which can be passed upon a national leader in a dark and critical time—he never despaired of the republic. Mr. Gifford speaks of his calmness and self-possession as not arising from apathy or coldness, and this may to some extent be true. There was no passion in Pitt's temperament, but there was sincerity. When the biographer goes on, however, to speak of his manners and deportment as highly prepossessing, he certainly runs counter to the general weight of testimony. It is true, undoubtedly, that no man was ever more beloved by his friends,—but, then, how few could boast of his friendship!—or inspired those who had the happiness of living in his society with a more affectionate attachment,—but, then, how few were admitted into that society!

1791]. Yet did he continue for eighteen years of his life suffering every one of his colleagues, nay, of his mere underlings in office, to vote against the question of Abolition, if they thought fit; men, the least inconsiderable of whom durst no more have thwarted him upon any of the more trifling measures of his government, than they durst have thrust their heads into the fire."—BROUGHAM, 'Sketches of Statesmen.'

We must read this panegyric along with Mr Gifford's pregnant admission that "he disdained to court popularity at the expense of unbecoming condescension," which is a skilful mode of acknowledging and excusing his general reserve. He adds, that his hours of retirement and relaxation were chiefly confined to the circle of a few friends, which circle he did not seem inclined to extend. In his earlier years he is spoken of as a delightful companion, "abounding in wit and mirth, and with a flow of lively spirits." But as his official cares increased, he went less and less into general society; and often, for whole hours, says Lord Stanhope, would ride or sit with only Steele, or Rose, or Dundas for his companion. It must be owned that, during the latter portion of his ministerial career, the aspect of affairs was well calculated to subdue the most vivacious, and to oppress with a weight of reflection the statesman responsible for the public safety. Lord Wellesley's evidence, however, does strongly confirm Mr. Gifford's opinion of his social qualities:—"In all places and at all times," he says, "Pitt's constant delight was society. There he shone with a degree of calm and steady lustre which often astonished me more than his most splendid efforts in Parliament. His manners were perfectly plain; his wit was quick and ready. He was endowed, beyond any man of his time whom I knew, with a gay heart and a social spirit."

During the brief period of his retirement from office, and while residing at Holwood (near Bromley), or Walmer Castle, Pitt occasionally resumed the studies of his youth, but he had not the strong literary sympathies

or critical faculty of Fox. He was chiefly partial to the Greek and Latin authors,—though not wholly neglecting the writers of his own time and country. Lord Stanhope records a statement of the late Earl of Aberdeen, that he once heard Pitt pronounce the “Scots, wha hae wi’ Wallace bled,” of Robert Burns, the noblest lyric in the language; and that he also spoke of Paley as one of our best writers. But he certainly was not a scholar, nor had he embraced any large extent of modern literature. He had not that wide acquaintance with history which distinguished Fox. And this is to be regretted, as a knowledge of historical philosophy would have taught him to regard without apprehension the phenomena of the French Revolution, and to wait in patience until time supplied a solution to the problems they involved. For want of this knowledge, Pitt lost his intellectual and moral balance, and carried his country into a burdensome and inglorious war.

It was a misfortune for Pitt that he acceded to power at so early an age. At twenty-five a young man has had no time to think out a policy. When he entered Parliament, fresh from the lectures of his father, he naturally ranged himself under the buff and blue banner of the Whigs, and from his intercourse with the Whig leaders he derived those sympathies with legislative and financial reform which never wholly deserted him. But he was called to the head of affairs before he had thoroughly assimilated the Whig principles; and when brought face to face with the French Revolution, could not preserve his self-command. The political storm and stress in which the remainder of his life was passed left him no time for

deliberate thought; and consequently he was generally satisfied to cope with the exigency of the hour, without any profound consideration of the issues to which it might lead. His policy was a policy of expedients.

William Pitt, the second son of the great Earl of Chatham by his wife, Lady Hester Grenville, was born at Hayes, near Bromley in Kent, on the 28th of May, 1759,—a year illustrated by the naval victories of Quiberon and Lagos, and the land-victories of Quebec and Minden.

The childhood of William Pitt was one of promise, and some scintillation of an ambitious spirit would seem to have been early perceived. He was not seven years old when, in allusion to the peerage which his mother enjoyed in her own right, he remarked, "I am glad I am not the eldest son; I want to speak in the House of Commons, like papa." He was only in his thirteenth year when his mother wrote to the Earl, on the occasion of his temporary absence from home,—“The fineness of William’s mind makes him enjoy with the highest pleasure what would be above the reach of any other creature of his small age.” He probably felt this “highest pleasure” when engaged in the composition of a tragedy in blank verse and five acts, entitled ‘*Laurentius, King of Clarinium*,’ which was acted at his father’s seat of Burton Pynsent, on the 22nd of August, 1772. It would be interesting if this juvenile production, the MS. of which is still preserved at Chevening, were published. Macaulay says of it,—“It is bad, of course,

but not worse than the tragedies of Hayley.* It is in some respects highly curious. There is no love. The whole plot is political; and it is remarkable that the interest, such as it is, turns on a contest about a Regency. On one side is a faithful servant of the Crown; on the other an ambitious and unprincipled conspirator. At length the king, who had been missing, reappears, resumes his power, and rewards the faithful defender of his rights." Apparently this was in anticipation of the struggle that took place in 1789, on the outbreak of George the 3rd's insanity.

Brought up at home on account of his feeble health, he enjoyed the benefit of his father's careful instruction. While his tutor, Mr. Wilson, grounded him in the classics and mathematics, the Earl attended to his practice in English composition, selecting for him the best models, such as Barrow's Sermons and the Letters of Junius, and directing his attention to the great Greek historians, than whom no finer examples of style could easily be selected. Pitt afterwards ascribed his wonderful readiness of speech to the assiduity enjoined upon him by his father; who bade him take up a book in any foreign language with which he was acquainted, and read out of it a passage into English, pausing, where he was not sure of the English equivalent, until the

* The biographer of Cowper; and the author of the 'Triumphs of Temper.' The reader will remember Byron's reference to him in the 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers':—

"Whether he spin poor couplets into plays,
Or damn the dead with purgatorial praise,
His style in youth or age is still the same,
For ever feeble and for ever tame."

right word came to his mind, and then proceeding. The Earl taught him also the art of managing and modulating the fine, clear, and sonorous voice with which Nature had gifted him. He caused him every day, or nearly every day, to write to him extracts from the best English poets, especially Milton and Shakespere;* a custom which refined his taste, and gave him a great command of choice and elevated language.

At fourteen Pitt went to Cambridge (1773), where he had for his tutor the Rev. George Pretymán, (afterwards, through his pupil's favour, Bishop of Lincoln †), and most industriously pursued his study of Thucydides, Quintilian, and Polybius. "The Historic Muse," he wrote to his father, "captivates extremely; but at the same time, I beg you to be persuaded that neither she nor any of her sisters allure me from the resolution of early hours [a 'resolution' prescribed by Dr. Addington, the family physician] which has been steadfastly adhered to, and makes this academic life agree perfectly." It is recorded that Pitt was regular in his attendance at the College Chapel. He was regular also in his daily ride and his daily glasses of port. He was regular in his presence at his tutor's theological lectures. In a word, he was regular in all he did.‡

* To this practice Captain Morris refers in one of his songs:—

"It's true, he's a pretty good gift of the gab,
And was taught by his dad on a stool, sir."

† In 1803, on inheriting a considerable estate, Bishop Pretymán assumed the name of Tomline. He was preferred to the see of Winchester in 1820, and died in 1827.

‡ Among the books which he read and mastered may be named Adam

Bishop Tomline gives us some idea of Pitt's literary partialities and dislikes at this time. We learn that he did not relish the rolling periods of Johnson, nor even the stately style of Gibbon. He preferred the elegant fluency of Hume and the artistic ease of Robertson. Of Middleton's 'Life of Cicero' he was an attentive reader, and like his father (and the Earl of Beaconsfield) he was a warm admirer of Bolingbroke. In after life he more than once declared that he regretted no loss in literature more than that of Bolingbroke's Parliamentary Speeches. He read French with accuracy, and appears to have fully appreciated Molière. The practice of extemporaneous translation, initiated by his father, he continued with Mr. Pretyma. When alone, he would dwell for hours upon striking passages of an orator or historian, carefully noticing their turn of phraseology, and studying their method of arranging a narrative. A few pages would thus occupy a whole morning. It was a favourite employment to compare opposite speeches on the same subject, and observe how each speaker handled his side of it. The authors whom he preferred for this purpose were Thucydides, Livy, and Sallust. On such occasions he frequently committed his observations to paper, that they might furnish a topic for conversation with his tutor at their next meeting. He was also accustomed to copy any eloquent passage, or beautiful or forcible expression, which he met with in his reading.

His studies at Cambridge were prudently interrupted

Smith's 'Wealth of Nations' and Locke's 'Essay on the Human Understanding.' The former taught him his system of finance.

by occasional visits to London, when he resorted to the House of Lords to hear his venerated father speak. Thus it happened to him to be present on the 7th of May, 1778, when, for the last time, the Great Earl addressed his peers. It was he who, with his brother-in-law, Lord Mahon, supported him as with feeble steps he limped into the august chamber. It was he who accompanied him back to his residence at Hayes, and was present when he drew his last breath. At the public funeral, which took place on the 9th of June, he walked, in the absence of his elder brother, as chief mourner, supported on one side by Lord Mahon, and on the other by the head of the Pitt family, Thomas Pitt of Boconnoc. To his mother, who remained at Hayes, he wrote the following account of the funeral:—

“I cannot let the servants return without letting you know that the sad solemnity has been celebrated so as to answer every important wish we could form on the subject. The Court did not honour us with their countenance, nor did they suffer the procession to be as magnificent as it ought; but it had, notwithstanding, everything essential to the great object, the attendance being most respectable, and the crowd of interested spectators immense. The Duke of Gloucester was in the Abbey. Lord Rockingham, the Duke of Northumberland, and all the ministry in town were present. The pall-bearers were Sir George Savile, Mr. Townshend, Dunning, and Burke. The eight assistant mourners were Lord Abingdon, Lord Cholmondeley, Lord Harcourt, Lord Effingham, Lord Townshend,

Lord Fortescue, Lord Shelburne, and Lord Camden. All our relations made their appearance . . .”

Pitt, at his father's death, was in possession of an income of about £300 a year. When he removed to London, in 1779, to enter himself at Lincoln's Inn, he was obliged to borrow from his uncle, Earl Temple, the sum necessary for the purchase of suitable "chambers." He duly kept his "terms," and still sought relaxation from his graver pursuits by attending Parliament on the occasion of any remarkable debate. It is said that, on one of these occasions, he was introduced, on the steps of the throne in the House of Lords, to Charles James Fox, his senior by ten years, and already in the flush of his fame. Fox used afterwards to relate that, as the debate proceeded, his young companion turned to him frequently, exclaiming, "But surely, Mr. Fox, that might be met thus," or "Yes, but he lays himself open to retort." Fox did not remember the particular criticisms; but he said that he was impressed at the time by the precocity of a lad who, through the whole sitting, was thinking only how the speeches on both sides might best be answered.

Pitt was called to the Bar in June, 1780, and in the following month he lost his favourite sister, Lady Mahon. In August he joined the Western Circuit for a few weeks. At the dissolution of Parliament he contested Cambridge, and was defeated; but Sir James Lowther, through the influence of the Duke of Rutland, was induced to find him a seat for his borough of Appleby. "No kind of condition was mentioned," he wrote to his mother, "but that if ever our lines of conduct should become opposite, I should give him an opportunity of

choosing another person." On the 23rd of January, 1781, he took his seat. "That date," says Lord Stanhope, "marks both the commencement and the close of his public life, for it was on the anniversary of the same day that he died."

II.

As became the son of Lord Chatham, Pitt, on entering the House of Commons, joined the Whig party; or, rather, the Shelburne section of that party. For the stress of events had sundered it into two main divisions; one, the larger, representing the old Whig connection,—the “Revolutionary families,” as they were fond of calling themselves, the “Venetian oligarchy,” as they have been absurdly misnamed by their detractors,—led by the Marquis of Rockingham, and Charles James Fox, assisted by Edmund Burke and Richard Brinsley Sheridan; the other, and smaller, led by Lord Shelburne and Lord Camden, and including Townshend, Dunning, and Edward Barré, representing the immediate followers of the late Earl of Chatham. Pitt, without hesitation, plunged into debate; and his first speech assured the House that it had gained no ordinary accession to its cluster of great speakers.

We may here transcribe Lord Holland's opinion of Pitt as a speaker. He applies to him Johnson's eulogium on Goldsmith, *nihil tetigit quod non ornavit*. The slightest and most frivolous detail, he says, grew luminous, polished, and splendid as he handled it; the most insignificant part of the subject derived interest and im-

portance from his impressive delivery, well-balanced elocution, and fortunate language. If at times he fell short of expectation, if at times he yielded to trite and frigid declamation, it was when great questions of national policy came up for discussion, and then he showed a striking inability to grasp fundamental principles. His excellence both in Parliament and business is chiefly to be ascribed, in Lord Holland's opinion, to the extraordinary quickness of his apprehension. He seized the details of any subject, however complicated, with the swiftness of intuition; and a methodical mind, joined to an almost unequalled command of words, enabled him to state them, and to reason upon them, with equal perspicuity and effect. In "statement" he was superior to all his contemporaries, even, in the opinion of some, surpassing his great rival, Fox, in that necessary though subordinate oratorical qualification. In promptitude of perception and readiness of argument Mr. Pitt equalled, it was not possible to excel, his illustrious rival; his flow of language was more even, and he bestowed more attention on elegance and precision of expression. But if, continues Lord Holland, his diction was more generally splendid, and his delivery more uniformly dignified, these very merits gave to his speeches a character of artificialness and monotony. Dazzling as was the lustre of his eloquence, it sometimes fatigued. He did not possess that power of illustration and humorous application which entertain; that warmth of language and glow of feeling which irresistibly move; and that mastery of philosophical research and deep original

thought which inform and enlighten an audience ; and in these respects he fell below Mr. Fox.

His earliest speeches were all in defence or support of what we should now call liberal doctrine. The war with the American Colonies, then near its inglorious close, he condemned with something of his father's vehemence. He delivered several strong and telling attacks upon the North Administration. He advocated Burke's motion for a retrenchment of expenditure ; and drew from the most philosophical of our statesmen some words of generous praise. For a person in his presence speak of Pitt as "a chip of the old block," Burke replied, "He is not a chip of the old block ; he is the block itself !" When the session closed, a Whig member remarked to Mr. Fox, "Mr. Pitt, I think, promises to be one of the first men in Parliament." Fox, with his usual generosity of feeling, answered, "He is so already." And in the following session, after one of Pitt's speeches, Fox, who followed him in debate, took occasion to say that he could no longer lament the loss of Lord Chatham, for he was again living in his son, with all his virtues and all his talents.

The North Administration having fallen in March, 1782, was succeeded by the government of which the Marquis of Rockingham was the head, and Fox and Shelburne the principal members. Burke, as we have already related, accepted the lucrative office of Paymaster. No place could be found for Pitt, who had previously declared that he would accept no "subordinate situation," and whose youth seemed to preclude his admission into the Cabinet. He was offered the Vice-Treasurership of Ireland, which his

father had condescended to hold ; but with remarkable self-reliance returned to his chambers and his £300 a year. His confidence in his own powers—his belief in his “star,”—is so colossal, that the critic feels unable to stigmatise it as presumption.

He gave a frank support, however, to the Rockingham Ministry. One question he took out of its hands and made his own, that of Parliamentary Reform. The motion which he introduced on the 7th of May, being designed to conciliate all sections of reformers, was prudently limited to the proposal of a Select Committee into the state of the representation. But his speech went further than his motion. He inveighed against the corrupt influence of the Crown ; an influence, he said, which had been pointed at in every period as the fertile source of all the miseries of the country ; an influence which had been substituted in the room of wisdom, of activity, of exertion, and of success ; an influence which had grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength, but, unhappily, had not diminished with our diminution, nor decayed with our decay. He attacked the close borough system, and enlarged upon the injustice of withholding representation from the great counties, when obscure villages, almost without populations, returned their one or two members each.* He proposed that the seats taken from the rotten boroughs should be given to the counties ; and, indeed, no other distribution was possible. The great

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* At this time, about seventy of these mock boroughs were the property of the Crown.

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manufacturing towns, which now exert so great an influence in the political world, were then, as Lord Stanhope observes, for the most part scattered hamlets; and no friend to representative institutions could desire to multiply the scenes of riot, drunkenness, and bribery, which Hogarth has preserved, and, at the time of an election, almost every open borough exhibited. Pitt did not receive the full support of the Whigs; for while Burke adored the constitution as the sublimest creation of human virtue and intelligence, the Duke of Richmond favoured universal suffrage and annual Parliaments, and thus the strength of the party was divided. Both Fox and Sheridan spoke on behalf of the motion, which was lost only by twenty votes (161 against 141). Lord Macaulay observes that the Reformers did not again muster in such strength until 1831.

Pitt and Fox spoke and voted in support of Alderman Sawbridge's motion, on the 17th of May, for shortening the duration of Parliaments; but Burke delivered against it one of his most fervid speeches. Frequent elections, he argued, would render the whole body of the people more lawless, more idle, more debauched; would utterly destroy their sobriety, industry, integrity, and simplicity. Their heads would never cool; the temptations of elections would for ever glitter upon their eyes; they would all grow politicians; every one, quitting his business, would seek to enrich himself by his vote; he did not seriously think the constitution, even to the wrecks of it, could survive five triennial elections.

The death of Lord Rockingham, on the 1st of July,

effected a change in the aspect of affairs. Fox proposed that he should be succeeded by the Duke of Portland; but the King resolved on preferring Lord Shelburne, between whom and Fox no real harmony had ever existed. Fox accordingly resigned, and was followed by Lord John Cavendish, Burke, and Sheridan; but their secession does not seem to have commanded the approval of the public.* Shelburne gave the seals of the Secretary of State† to Thomas Townshend and Lord Grantham. The post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the leadership of the House of Commons, was offered to and accepted by William Pitt, who had only just completed his 23rd year. Our history presents no other example of such extraordinary preferment of a young politician, and it could be justified only by the possession of remarkable talents and not less remarkable discretion.

The new Ministry, finding itself confronted by a formidable Opposition, which consisted of the two separate parties of Mr. Fox and Lord North, looked eagerly around for some addition to its strength. Shelburne was not indisposed to offer terms to Lord North; but Pitt refused to serve along with the author of the American War, while he wished to regain Fox and his former allies.

* Fox has been severely censured for resigning, and all kinds of motives have been unfairly attributed to him. But his conduct was doubtlessly dictated by his conviction of Shelburne's insincerity.

† The office of Secretary of State was originally divided into the Northern and Southern Departments. By the Rockingham ministry the division into Home and Foreign Departments was introduced, the Home Secretary being regarded as senior in official rank.

The difference thus engendered between the two Ministers was intensified by Shelburne's proposal to cede Gibraltar to Spain in return for a West Indian island; a proposal which Pitt, with several other members of the cabinet, very warmly and successfully combatted. Treaties were concluded with France and Spain, of which the whole Cabinet approved; but when, in February, 1783, it became necessary to submit them to Parliament, Shelburne and Pitt again felt the want of a majority, and the latter was empowered to invite Fox and his friends to return to office. On the 10th of February he sought an interview with Fox; who, on learning the object of his visit, asked whether it was intended that Lord Shelburne should remain First Lord of the Treasury. Pitt replied in the affirmative. Fox rejoined that it was impossible for him to belong to any administration of which Lord Shelburne was the head. If that was his determination, said the young Minister, further discussion would be useless, "as he did not come to betray Lord Shelburne," and he took his leave.* There was nothing at this time, says Sir George Lewis, either in the personal or public relations of the two statesmen, which would have pre-

* William Grenville writes to his brother, Lord Temple, on the 11th of February:—"Lord Shelburne's weakness is every day more apparent. Nothing is clearer than that he cannot stand a week without some addition. The strongest proof of this is what Pitt told me to-day:—that it being thought necessary to make some attempt at a junction with Fox, he had seen him to-day, when he asked one question, viz., whether there were any terms on which he would come in. The answer was, None while Lord Shelburne remained; and so it ended."—"Courts and Cabinets of George the 3rd," i. 148, 149.

vented them from acting together, and serving in the same Cabinet. Their political principles were similar; and the elder statesman had spoken warmly and generously of the younger's abilities and character upon his first appearance in public life. "Fox," says Walpole, "had fondly espoused him, and kindly, not jealously nor fearfully, wished to have him his friend." The obstacle to their union, an union which would have been of the highest advantage to the national interests, was the deep-rooted suspicion of Lord Shelburne, entertained, not altogether justly, by the Whig leader.

The coalition of Fox and Lord North followed, and the Shelburne ministry went down. The amendment on the Address was carried in the House of Commons by a majority of 16. Fox's speech on this occasion was one of his finest; Pitt's, one of his weakest. Bishop Tomline owns that he seldom spoke with less vigour or discretion. Replying to Sheridan, he observed that no man admired more than he did the abilities of the right honourable gentleman, the elegant sallies of his thought, the gay effusions of his fancy, his dramatic turns, and his epigrammatic point; and if they were reserved for the proper stage, they would no doubt, receive what the honourable gentleman's abilities always did receive, the plaudits of the audience; and it would be his fortune *sui plausu gaudere theatri*. This ungenerous allusion provoked from the author of 'The School for Scandal' a severe retort. "On the particular sort of personality," he said, "which the right honourable gentleman has thought proper to make use of, I need not make any comment. The pro-

priety, the taste, the gentlemanly point of it, must have been obvious to the House. But," he continued, "let me assure him that I do now, and will at any time he chooses to repeat this sort of allusion, meet it with the most sincere good humour. Nay, I will say more—flattered and encouraged by the right honourable gentleman's panegyric on my talent; if ever I again engage in the compositions he alludes to, I may be tempted to an act of presumption—to attempt an improvement on one of Ben Jonson's best characters, the character of the Angry Boy in 'The Alchemist.' " *

If Pitt on this occasion sank below, he rose above himself in his speech on the 21st, delivered in defence of the peace which he and his colleagues had just concluded. Following Fox, he began by saying,—“Revering, as I do, sir, the great abilities of the right honourable gentleman who spoke last, I lament, in common with the House, when those abilities are misemployed, as on the present question, to inflame the imagination

• This incident suggested to Sheridan the following *jeu d'esprit* :—

“ADVERTISEMENT EXTRAORDINARY—We hear that, in consequence of a hint lately given in the House of Commons, the play of 'The Alchemist' is certainly to be performed by a set of gentlemen for our diversion, in a private apartment of Buckingham House. The characters, thus described in the old editions of Ben Jonson, are to be represented in the following manner—the old practice of men playing the female parts being adopted :—*Subtle* (the Alchemist), Lord Sh-lb-e; *Fan* (the housekeeper), the Lord Ch-ll-r; *Doll Common* (their colleague), the Lord Adv-c-te; *Druggier* (a tobacco-man), Lord Eff-ng-m; *Epicure Mammon*, Mr. R-gby; *Tribulation*, Dr. J-nk-a-n; *Ananias* (a Little Pastor), Mr. H-ll; *Kastril* (the Angry Boy), Mr. W. P-tt; *Dame Pliant*, Gen. C-nw-y; and *Surly*, His——(the King).”

and mislead the judgment. I am told, sir, 'he does not envy me the triumph of my situation this day,' a sort of language which becomes the candour of that honourable gentleman as ill as his present principles. The triumphs of party, sir, with which this self-appointed minister seems so highly elate, shall never seduce me to any inconsistency which the busiest suspicion shall presume to glance at. I will never engage in political enmities without a public cause. I will never forego such enmities without the public approbation, nor will I be questioned and cast off in the face of this House by one virtuous and dissatisfied friend." He declared that the attack of the Opposition was levelled, not at the Treaty, but at the Earl of Shelburne. "This," he said, "is the object which has raised this storm of faction; this is the aim of the unnatural Coalition to which I have alluded. If, however, the baneful alliance is not already formed, if this ill-omened marriage is not already solemnised, I know a just and lawful impediment; and, in the name of the public safety, I here forbid the banns." Attacking Lord North, he continued:—"Whatever appears dishonourable or inadequate in this peace is strictly chargeable to the noble lord in the Blue riband, whose profusion of the public money, whose notorious temerity and obstinacy in prosecuting the war which originated in his pernicious and oppressive policy, and whose utter incapacity to fill the station he occupied rendered a peace of any description indispensable to the preservation of the State." Appealing to the memory of Chatham, he said:—"My earliest impressions were in favour of the noblest and most disin-

interested modes of serving the public ; these impressions are still dear, and will, I hope, remain for ever dear to my heart ; I will cherish them as a legacy infinitely more valuable than the richest inheritance." He concluded with those noble lines from Horace :—*

"Laudo manentem, si celeres quatit
Pennas resigno quas dedit—
. probamque
Pauperiem sine dote quasso."

On the resignation of Shelburne, the King offered the premiership to Pitt ; who, after a slight hesitation, declined it. The Duke of Portland then became First Minister, with Fox and Lord North as Secretaries of State. The chief legislative measure of the Coalition was the Indian Bill, which we have described in a preceding chapter. It supplied the King with a pretext for the unconstitutional interference by which he got rid of ministers whom he abhorred, and of whose independence he had a lively dread. During the interval Pitt paid a visit to the Continent, and at Rheims met with the Abbé de Layeard, who was acting as the Archbishop's delegate. He appears to have cultivated his society ; and one day, in conversation, the Abbé asked, when Pitt had been dwelling eloquently on the excellences of the British Constitution, in what part (since all human things were perishable) might it be first expected

* Bishop Tomline relates, that being under the gallery while Pitt delivered his peroration, a young member turned to him and asked eagerly, "Why did he omit 'et mea virtute me involvo'?" The omission, says the Bishop, was generally considered as indicative of Pitt's modesty and good sense. According to Wilberforce, Pitt was seriously indisposed at this time.

to decay ? Pitt, after a moment's reflection, answered, "The prerogative of the king will perish first, and next the authority of the House of Peers." "I am much surprised," remarked the Abbé, "that a country so moral as England can submit to be governed by such a spendthrift and such a rake as Fox ; it seems to show that you are less moral than you claim to be." "The remark is just," answered Pitt, "but you have not been under the wand of the magician." At Paris, Pitt, as the son of the great Chatham, was received with special distinction. "They all, men and women," wrote Wilberforce, "crowded round Pitt in shoals ; and he behaved with great spirit, though he was sometimes a little bored when they talked to him of Parliamentary Reform."

Parliament met on the 11th of November. A few days later Fox introduced his Indian Bill. Erskine, the great lawyer, who for the first time had gained a seat in Parliament, took part in the debate. Lord Campbell, on the authority of an eye-witness, records the reception he met with from Pitt. "Evidently intending to reply, Pitt sat, with pen and paper in his hand, prepared to catch the arguments of this formidable adversary. He wrote a word or two. Erskine proceeded ; but with every additional sentence Pitt's attention to the paper relaxed, his look became more careless, and he obviously began to think the orator less and less worthy of his attention. At length, while every eye in the House was fixed upon him, with a contemptuous smile he dashed the pen through the papers and flung them on the floor. Erskine never recovered from this expression

of disdain ; his voice faltered, he struggled through the remainder of his speech, and sank into the seat dispirited and shorn of his fame."* The Indian Bill was successfully carried through the Commons ; but in the Lords it was defeated by the King's manœuvres and Earl Temple's intrigues. Who does not remember the famous lines in the ' *Rolliad* ' ?

" On the great day, when Buckingham, by pairs,
 Ascended, Heaven impelled, the King's back-stairs,
 And panting, breathless, strained his lungs to show
 From Fox's bill what mighty ills would flow ; . . .
 Still, as with stammering tongue, he told his tale,
 Unusual terrors Brunswick's heart assail ;
 Wide starts his white wig from his royal ear,
 . And each particular hair stands stiff with fear." †

On the 17th of December the Bill was rejected ; and on the following day, with unseemly abruptness, the King commanded Fox and Lord North to give up the seals. Once more the task of forming a Government was proffered to Pitt ; and this time the young statesman did not shrink from it. He was called upon to face an immense hostile majority in the Commons ; but he relied on his tact and patience to baffle its assaults, and his sagacity detected the decline of Fox's popularity which had followed the ill-omened Coalition. He calculated that if he could defer a dissolution of Parlia-

* To say the least of it, this anecdote would seem to have been coloured by the prejudice of the narrator. Brougham says of Erskine :—" It must be admitted that, had he appeared in any other period than the age of the Foxes, the Pitts, and the Burkes, there is little chance that he would have been eclipsed even as a debater."

† ' *The Rolliad*, pt. ii. p. 8. (edit. 1790).

ment for a few months, he would be able to convert the majority into a minority. Still, his acceptance of the Premiership must be regarded as one of those acts of audacity which only success can justify. Both his friends and enemies were of opinion that the experiment would fail. Lord Temple, indeed, held office only for three days. On a question of adjournment in the Commons, Pitt's minority was so small that he dared not take a division. On the 12th of January (1784), Lord Surrey's motions against the new ministry, strongly worded as they were, passed by a majority of 54. Fox wrote to Northington, the Irish Chancellor,—“I think there can be very little doubt but our administration will again be established.” “We are so strong,” he said, “that nobody can undertake without madness, and if they do I think we shall destroy them almost as soon as they are formed.” So gloomy was the prospect that the King was induced to send a written message to the Duke of Portland, proposing a meeting between him and Pitt. The meeting took place “for the purpose of forming a new administration on a wide basis, and on fair and equal terms”; but as the negotiators could not agree on the meaning of “equal terms,” it came to nothing. Out of doors the feeling of the public ran strongly in favour of the young minister who so courageously withstood the formidable band of adversaries. The ballad-minstrels sang :—

“But Chatham, thank heaven, has left us a son,
When *he* takes the helm, we are sure not undone;
The glory his father revived of the land,
And Britannia has taken Pitt by the hand.”

In a caricature entitled 'Britannia Aroused ; or, The Coalition Monsters Destroyed,' Britannia was depicted as casting from her the two Coalition leaders as the enemies of Liberty, of which she carried the red cap by her side as the fashionable symbol. It must be acknowledged, however, that the voices of the street sometimes inclined to Fox. Thus, in a caricature dated the 11th of March, Fox appears as "The Champion of the People," equipped with the sword of Justice and the shield of Truth, assailing a many-headed hydra, which is variously labelled, "Despotism," "Assumed Prerogative," "Secret Influence," "Oppression," and the like. In another, "The State Auction," Pitt, as a young auctioneer, knocks down with the hammer of "Prerogative" most of the precious things of the Constitution. Dundas (then Treasurer of the Navy) acts as his assistant, and holds up for sale "Lot One, the Rights of the People." Pitt exclaims :—"Show the lot this way, Harry—a'going, a'going—speak quick, or it's gone—hold up the lot, ye Dund-ass !" To which replies the assistant : "I can hould it no higher, sir." On the left, the "chosen representers" (as they are designated) leave the auction-room, murmuring : "Adieu to Liberty !" or shouting : "Now or never !" Fox alone maintains a gallant front, and says :—"I am determined to bid with spirit for Lot One ; he shall pay dear for it that outbids me." The Whigs had the advantage of the lyrical talents of Captain Morris, who in 'The Baby and Nurse' and 'Billy's too young to Drive Us,' made the most of the Prime Minister's youth. The first two verses of the latter may be quoted :—

" If life's a rough journey, as moralists tell,
Englishmen sure made the best on't;
On this spot of earth they bade liberty dwell,
While slavery holds all the rest on't.
They thought the best solace for labour and care
Was a state independent and free, sir;
And this thought, though a curse that no tyrant can bear,
Is the blessing of you and of me, sir.
Then while through this whirlabout journey we reel,
We'll keep unabused the best blessing we feel,
And watch ev'ry turn of the politic wheel—
Billy's too young to drive us.

The car of Britannia, we all must allow,
Is ready to crack with its load, sir;
And wanting the hand of experience, will now
Most surely break down on the road, sir.
Then must we, poor passengers, quietly wait
To be crush'd by this mischievous spark, sir?
Who drives a d . . . job in the carriage of state,
And got up like a thief in the dark, sir.
Then while through this whirlabout journey we reel,
We'll keep unabused the best blessing we feel,
And watch ev'ry turn of the politic wheel—
Billy's too young to drive us."

From a letter of Horace Walpole's, dated the 30th of March, we get a very clear view of the "situation," and are able to see how energetically the country was rallying to the young Minister's support:—"There has been a great deal of boldness," he says, "on both sides. Mr. Fox, convinced of the necessity of hardy measures to correct and save India, and coupling with that rough medicine a desire of confirming the power of himself and his allies, had formed a great system, and a very sagacious one; so sagacious, that it struck France with terror. But as this new power was to be founded on the

demolition of that nest of monsters, the East India Company, and their spawn of Nabobs, etc., they took the alarm ; and the secret junto at Court rejoiced that they did. The Court struck the blow at the ministers ; but it was the gold of the Company that really conjured up the storm, and has diffused it all over England. On the other hand, Mr. Pitt has braved the majority of the House of Commons, has dissolved the existent one, and, I doubt, given a wound to that branch of the legislature, which, if she does not turn, may be very fatal to the Constitution. The nation is intoxicated ; and has poured in addresses of thanks to the Crown for exerting the prerogative *against* the palladium of the people."

There can be no doubt, we think, that the position of Mr. Fox and the majority was thoroughly constitutional ; and it is difficult to understand why they did not receive the public encouragement. Much must be allowed for the ignorance of the true principles of Constitutional Government which then prevailed ; but still the people, who now supported an indefensible exercise of the prerogative of the Crown, were the people who had shouted themselves hoarse for "Wilkes and Liberty." There was certainly nothing in Fox's Indian Bill to outrage popular sympathies ; and if the Coalition might be objectionable on the ground of personal morality, it was not injurious to the public interests. The change of feeling which gave Pitt in the new House of Commons a majority of more than two to one must be ascribed, partly, we suspect, to the shameless interference of the Court, partly to the influence of the East India Company upon the classes who then swayed the elections, and partly to the

romantic interest which attached to Pitt as the son of Chatham and as a young statesman of the highest promise.

After a gallant struggle of two months,* during which

* The different stages of the contest may be briefly indicated. A vote of want of confidence was carried on the 11th of January; on the 23rd, Pitt's Indian Bill was thrown out on the second reading. On the 26th, he haughtily declared that he would neither dissolve Parliament nor resign office. On the 4th of February, he received some encouragement from the Lords, who passed two resolutions, censuring the attempt of the Commons "to suspend the execution of law by separately assuming to itself the direction of a discretionary power," and declaring that "the undoubted authority of appointing to the great offices of executive government is solely vested in his Majesty." These were followed by an address to the King, assuring him of their support in the exercise of his undoubted prerogative, and of their reliance on his wisdom in the choice of Ministers. The Commons replied by angry resolutions, asserting their privileges, and justifying their conduct. Meantime, resolutions to the effect that "a firm and united administration was required in the present arduous and critical situation of public affairs, and that the continuance of the present Ministers in their offices prevented the formation of such an administration," were carried, and ordered to be laid before the King. No answer being returned, Mr. Fox said, on the 20th of February, that the House could not vote supplies until it knew what line of conduct his Majesty intended to pursue. Consequently, on the 18th, Pitt informed the House that the King had not thought fit to dismiss his present Ministers, nor had they resigned. The supplies were, therefore, postponed for two days; and on the 20th, an address was carried, expressing the confidence of the House in the royal wisdom to remove any obstacle to the formation of such an administration as the House had declared to be requisite. This elicited from the King an assurance that he was anxious for a firm and united Administration; but no charge, he said, had been brought forward against his present Ministers; and that numbers of his subjects had expressed their satisfaction at the late changes in his councils. Without entering upon other business, and again postponing the supplies, the House adjourned until the 1st of March, when, on the motion of Mr. Fox, a third address was presented to the King, to the effect that "the continuance of an administration which did not possess the confidence of the representatives of the people, was injurious to the public service," and

Pitt's minority had gradually approximated in numerical strength to Fox and North's majority, the King dissolved Parliament on the 25th of March. The contest was then transferred from the House to the country, where it raged with undiminished bitterness. Few general elections have called forth angrier feelings; and few have had a more decisive result. The Opposition was beaten all along the line. Walpole, writing on the 11th of April, remarks that the scene had wofully changed for the Whig party, though not half the new parliament was then chosen. "Though they still," he

praying for its removal. Fox declared that for a Ministry to hold office in defiance of the House of Commons was unprecedented, and Pitt rejoined that not less unprecedented was it for a Ministry to be called upon to retire without being tried, and without just cause. The King, in his answer, affirmed that no charge or complaint had been brought against the Ministers, and therefore he declined to dismiss them. Thus proceeded the strange parliamentary drama; the King and the Ministry contending against the Commons with a pertinacity equal to the activity of the latter. It was unwise for the King to have placed himself in such a position; for defeat would have been ruinous, and a victory was hardly to be desired. Fortunately, the Commons extricated him from the dilemma by their change of opinion. On the 12th of January, Fox's majority was 54; on the 1st of March it fell to 12, and on the 8th, when Fox moved "a representation" to the King, which went over the whole ground, and repeated the statements of the previous addresses, it was only one. There was then an end of the battle. The Mutiny Bill was passed, supplies were voted; and Parliament, being prorogued on the 24th, was dissolved on the following day. Thus the King had gained his end without any direct humiliation of the House of Commons. "Not only had he overcome and ruined a party which he hated, but he had established the ascendancy of the Crown, which henceforth, for nearly fifty years, continued to prevail over every other power in the State."—SIR T. ERSKINE MAY, *'Constitutional History of England,'* i. 62-74; *'Parliamentary History,'* xxiv. 280-788.

says, "contest a very few counties and some boroughs, they own themselves totally defeated. They reckoned themselves sure of 240 members; they probably will not have 150. In short, between the industry of the Court and the India Company, and that momentary phrensy that sometimes seizes a whole nation, as if it were a vast animal, such aversion to the Coalition, and such a detestation of Mr. Fox, have seized the country, that, even where omnipotent gold retains its influence, the elected pass through an ordeal of the most violent abuse." The Court party naturally were in exuberant spirits, and their sense of triumph overflowed in pasquinade, caricature, and ballad. It was suggested to Fox that nothing was left for him to do but to turn preacher, and seek among the saints the encouragement he had not found among the sinners; an allusion, perhaps, to the general alliance which existed between the Whigs and the Dissenters. Thus ran a popular song:—

"Dear Charles, whose eloquence I prize,
 To whom my every vote is due,
 What shall we now, alas, devise
 To cheer our faint desponding crew?
 Well have we fought the hard campaign,
 And battled it with all our force;
 But self-esteem alone we gain,
 Outrun and jockey'd in the course.
 Within the Senate, and without,
 Our credit fails; th' enlighten'd nation,
 The boasted Coalition scout,
 And hunt us from th' Administration. . . .
 And shall we then, like fools, despair?
 Can we no thriving scheme invent?
 Yes;—let cameleons feed on air,
 Such diet will not thee content."

Fox, as the Preacher, ascends the pulpit ; and beneath him sits Lord North :—

“ How spruce will North beneath thee sit !
With joy officiate as thy clerk !
Attune the hymn, renounce his wit,
And carol like the morning lark ! ”

Sheridan is to act as pew-opener, and Burke as leader of the choir :—

“ To comic Richard, ever true,
Be it assigned the curs to lash,
With ready hand to ope the pew,
With ready hand to take the cash.

For thee, O beauteous and sublime !
What place of honour shall we find ?
To tempt with money were a crime ;
Thine are the riches of the mind.

Clad in a matron's cap and robe,
Thou shalt assist each wither'd crone ;
And, as the piercing thrust shall probe,
Be't thine to lead the choral groan ! ”

The rejected candidates of the Opposition, no fewer than one hundred and eighty, were happily designated “ Fox's Martyrs.”

III.

For sixteen years Pitt ruled England almost without let or hindrance. We have now to see what use he made of his long lease of ministerial power. Though his accession was the sign of a great change, it did not indicate a revolution. The country had thrown over the Whigs and taken into favour the Tories ; but it had made no violent swerve towards either absolutism or democracy.

In Pitt's Cabinet all the members were peers, except himself, and he was the son and brother of an Earl.*

Mr. Goldwin Smith justly points out that as he had come into power by the King's personal favour, he could do nothing against the King or his order. On the other hand, he so far disappointed the royal expectations that he never became the King's tool. He would not condescend to play the part which Lord North had played, and Bute before Lord North. If his rise marked the discomfiture of the so-called Whig oligarchy, it marked also the beginning of the end of George the 3rd's disastrous assumption of the character of the Patriot King. No doubt the rôle which Pitt had designed for himself was that of a loftier and purer Walpole, and the great objects at which he aimed were the reform of the national finance and the promotion of national prosperity.

* "The highly aristocratic composition of Pitt's Cabinet is a proof that there had been no revolution ; it has also been justly cited as one of the many confutations of the theory that the Tories are less oligarchical than the Whigs."—GOLDWIN SMITH, 'Three English Statesmen,' p. 172.

It was one well-suited to an intellect which was eminently practical, and during the earlier years of his Administration he carried it out with much success. But when the storm of the Revolution raged over Europe he was unfitted to cope with it, and it found him unprepared, by a profound study of the philosophy of history, or even by a clear appreciation of the wants and tendencies of the time, to deal with it manfully. He gave way to panic, and his fears hurried him into a path the goal of which he did not foresee.

In the first session of the new Parliament Pitt introduced his Indian Bill, establishing a Ministerial Board of Control for the affairs of India, and creating that system of "double government," which, with some modifications, endured until 1858. It was on the face of it an imperfect measure, and, in statesmanlike grasp and foresight, far inferior to Fox's; but it was swept through the Commons by the flood-tide of a great majority, Fox rallying in opposition to it only a small body of sixty members. In the Lords no division was attempted. The Minister's financial legislation was equally successful and more praiseworthy.* The American War had

* It was about this time that the authors of ' Criticisms on the Rolliad,' — Lord George Townshend, Dr. Lawrence, Tickell, George Ellis, and General Fitzpatrick,—began the issue of their clever *jeu d'esprit*. It appeared in the ' Morning Herald ' during the last six months of 1784, and the first six months of 1785; and purported to be an analysis, with illustrative quotations, of an epic poem, the hero of which is John (afterwards Lord) Rolle, then member for Devonshire. Of the nature of its personalities, the following attack upon Pitt may be taken as a specimen :—

" Pert without fire, without experience sage,
Young with more art than Shelburne glean'd from age,

burdened the country with a floating debt of fourteen millions; and at so low an ebb was the national credit, that Consols had sunk to 56. The heavy customs duties offered a premium to smuggling, which was conducted on a truly colossal scale. Pitt proceeded to raise income to a level with expenditure by an increase of taxation; and this taxation he distributed fairly over all classes. In after sessions he worked out with much boldness a plan of financial reform which was not unworthy of the pupil of Adam Smith. By a considerable reduction of the tea duties he checked smuggling, while he increased consumption. He was able also to abolish numerous places in the Excise and the Customs, and, by limiting patronage, to stem the progress of corruption. In his desire to reduce the debt, he was led to favour the project of a sinking fund, * originated as early as 1786, and to some extent adopted by Sir Robert Walpole.

Too proud from pilfer'd greatness to descend,

Too humble not to call Dundas his friend ;

In solemn dignity and sullen state,

This new Octavius rises to debate !

Mild and more mild he sees each placid row

• Of country gentlemen with rapture glow ;

He sees, convuls'd with sympathetic throbs,

Apprentice Peers and deputy Nabobs !

Nor Rum Contractors think his speech too long,

While words, like treacle, trickle from his tongue ;

O Soul congenial to the Souls of Rolles !

Whether you tax the luxury of coals,

Or vote some necessary millions more,

To feed our Indian friends' exhausted store,

Fain would I praise (if I, like thee, could praise)

Thy matchless virtues in congenial lays."—(p. 38.)

* Pitt acted on a proposal put forward by a Dr. Price.

The surplus of income over expenditure in 1781 amounted to one million ; and it seemed to Pitt that it might form the nucleus of a Sinking Fund, which, in a certain number of years, would, by the mere process of compound interest, wipe out the whole debt of £250,000,000. Modern financiers are fully aware of the chimerical nature of this idea; they know that a surplus can be made available in the reduction of funded debt only by its being applied to "the extinction of an equivalent amount of stock." But this amount of credit may fairly be allowed to Pitt, that by his sinking-fund project he encouraged a disposition on the part of the country to retrench expenditure and reduce the national burdens.

Not less to his honour was the stimulus he gave to a policy of peace by his commercial measures. He anticipated Cobden in carrying out a commercial treaty with France ; and one cannot but regret that he was encountered on such a point by the opposition of Fox. It was the Whig leader rather than the Tory minister who should have denounced the pernicious error that France was naturally and unchangeably England's "sweet enemy." It was Fox rather than Pitt, except indeed that Pitt had been bred in the Whig school, who should have combatted the delusion that between nations a chronic condition of hostility must necessarily prevail. "I shall not hesitate," said Pitt, "to contend against the too-frequently expressed opinion that France is and must be the unalterable enemy of England. My mind revolts from this position as monstrous and impossible. To suppose that any nation can be unalterably the enemy of another is weak and childish." These words, and the

sentiment they embody, are in agreeable contrast to the Whig leader's. "Undoubtedly," said Fox, "I will not go the length of asserting that France is and must remain the unalterable enemy of England, and that she might not secretly feel a wish to act amicably with respect to this kingdom. It is possible, but it is scarcely probable. That she, however, feels in that manner at present I not only doubt, but disbelieve. France is the natural political enemy of Great Britain." It may be assumed, however, that Fox's hostility was directed against the rulers rather than the ruled,—against the House of Bourbon rather than France itself. He found a supporter in Edmund Burke; but both of these great men must surely have felt that political exigencies had impelled them upon a course unworthy of their genius and of their generous sympathies. It is a striking illustration of the irony that seems to govern human affairs that, within a few years, Pitt was destined to become the chief of the war party against France, and Fox to appear as her advocate and friend.

We must here go back a couple of years to point out that, in their treatment of the affairs of Ireland, the Opposition pursued an equally mischievous and undignified course. The condition of Ireland, like the condition of India, was one of the problems which demanded solution by whatever government might take charge of the vessel of the State; and it was one of the most difficult. The revolt of the American colonists had not been without influence on the Anglo-Irish colonists; and every English statesman was called upon to read what was approaching in Ireland in "the black and bloody

characters" of the American war. The Anglo-Irish began by demanding commercial, and went on to exact legislative, independence, which was granted them in 1782. But they soon discovered that the restrictions which hampered Irish commerce could not be removed without the consent of the English legislature. Adam Smith had already pointed out that the concession of free trade between the two countries would deliver Ireland, as the union of Scotland and England had delivered Scotland, from the presence of a narrow-minded aristocracy; and, in truth, from a much more oppressive aristocracy, "an aristocracy the most odious of all, an aristocracy of political and religious prejudice, which, more than any other distinctions, animated the insolence of the oppressor and the hatred of the oppressed, and made the natives of the same country greater enemies than those of different countries ever were." Following in Adam Smith's footsteps, Pitt, in 1785, proposed that absolute freedom should be granted to Irish trade, that the two countries should be placed on a footing of perfect commercial equality, and that, in return, Ireland, after its gross hereditary revenue had reached a certain point, should devote the surplus to the reduction of the imperial burthens. The eleven resolutions embodying his views passed through the Irish Parliament almost without opposition. Pitt brought them before the English House of Commons, on the 22nd of February, in one of his most luminous statements, concluding with a noble peroration:—"Adopt that system of trade with Ireland that will have tended to enrich one part of the empire without

impoverishing the other, while it gives strength to both ;
that, like mercy, the favourite attribute of Heaven,

‘ is twice blessed,

It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.’

Surely, after the heavy loss which our country has sustained from the recent severance of her dominions, there ought to be no object more impressed on the feelings of the House than to endeavour to preserve from further dismemberment and diminution—to unite and to connect—what yet remains of our reduced and shattered empire. . . Of all the objects of my political life, this is, in my opinion, the most important that I ever have engaged in ; nor do I imagine I shall ever meet another that shall rouse every emotion of my heart in so strong a degree as does the present.”

The Opposition, however, proved too strong for Pitt on this occasion. Fox and Burke were supported in their strange hostility to Free Trade by the manufacturing interest. A petition against the Minister’s scheme was signed by eighty-thousand Lancashire manufacturers. From most of the great towns came similar petitions. Pitt endeavoured, by modifications, to conciliate his English adversaries, and brought forward a new and narrower measure on the 12th of May, which passed the Commons, but in the House of Lords was severely denounced by Lord George Germaine, the unfortunate “hero” of the Battle of Minden. His conduct elicited a bitter epigram :—

“ ‘Gainst France opposed on Minden’s plain,

When Brunswick gave the word—

‘ Bring all your power, my Lord Germaine ; ’

The noble lord demurr’d.

" Pitt's propositions now the foe,
He boldly mounts the breach,
Obeys command, and aims a blow
With all his power of—speech."

The changes and limitations by which Pitt had made his proposal more acceptable to the English, rendered it less agreeable to the Irish House of Commons ; and its growing disfavour on the other side of the Channel was not diminished by Fox's insinuations that it aimed a blow at the legislative independence of Ireland. " I will not barter English commerce for Irish slavery," said the great Whig leader ; " that is not the price I would pay, nor is this the thing I would purchase." By the time, as Mr. Morley remarks, that the English had been gained over to the scheme, the Irish had been completely alienated from it. " A substantial boon was sacrificed amid bonfires and candles to the phantoms of Irish independence. The result must have convinced Pitt more firmly than ever that his great master, Adam Smith, was right in predicting that nothing short of the union of the two countries would deliver Ireland from out of the hands of her fatuous chiefs and their too worthy followers."

In our memoir of Fox we have incidentally remarked on the part which Pitt played in the impeachment of Warren Hastings (1786). At the outset he professed himself indifferent or impartial. " I am neither," he said, " a determined friend nor foe to Mr. Hastings, but I am resolved to support the principles of justice and equity. Mr. Hastings, notwithstanding all the asser-

tions to the contrary, may be as innocent as the child unborn ; but he is now under the eye and suspicion of Parliament, and his innocence or guilt must be proved by incontestable evidence." On the first charge brought against the ex-proconsul, he voted in his favour, and Burke was defeated by 119 against 67. The second charge, which assailed him for his treatment of Cheyte Sing, the Rajah of Benares, was moved by Fox. Pitt rose to speak to it. From the opening portion of his speech, the House inferred that he was again bent upon screening Hastings. Great was the surprise, therefore, when he concluded by announcing that he should vote for the charge as proved. But the majority, nevertheless, felt bound to follow their leader ; and Fox's resolution was carried by 119 votes against 79. Pitt's sudden change of front has been the cause of much speculation, and has been explained on various grounds. Our own belief is, that, at first he was influenced by the favour with which the Court regarded Hastings, and probably also by his political prejudice against a course of action initiated by his political opponents ; but that as soon as he had thoroughly examined the case, and convinced himself of the authenticity and weight of the evidence supporting it, he acted honestly on a sense of public duty.

In the session of 1787, Pitt steadily pursued his great enterprise of financial reform. Among the measures which he introduced and carried, Lord Stanhope enumerates one for farming the duty on post-horses, to guard against the numerous small frauds that were

constantly practised ; another for regulating lotteries and suppressing the insurance of lottery-tickets ; and the consolidation of duties in the Customs, Excise, and Stamps. We gain a high idea of the Minister's patience, industry, and mastery of details when we find that to work out the last-named measure, abolishing the old duties and substituting new ones on a simpler and uniform plan, no fewer than two thousand five hundred and thirty-seven resolutions were found necessary. Burke, on this occasion, refused to offer any cavilling criticism or party opposition : " it rather behoves us," he said, " to rise up manfully, and, doing justice to the right honourable gentleman's merit, to return him thanks on behalf of ourselves and of the country."

The same session was marked by the Prince of Wales's application to Parliament for the payment of his debts, and for some addition to his income. Notice of a motion to this effect was given by one of his friends, Alderman Newnham. Pitt immediately announced that, if it were persevered in, he should be compelled to meet it with a negative. In the discussion that followed, Mr. Rolle, the hero of 'The Rolliad,' observed that if such a motion were made, he should move the previous question, because the motion itself affected "our Constitution both in Church and State." It was well understood that these words conveyed an allusion to the rumour that the Prince of Wales had contracted a secret marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert, a Roman Catholic lady, in direct violation of the Royal Marriage Act, and, what was more important, of the Act of Settlement, which regulated the Succession to the Throne. Fox, therefore, as the

Prince's friend and adviser, took the earliest opportunity of declaring the report a calumny. "I know," said Mr. Rolle, in reply, "that there are certain laws and Acts of Parliament which forbid such a marriage, but still there are ways in which it might have taken place." "I deny it altogether," said Fox, impetuously; "I deny it in point of fact as well as law. The fact not only could never have happened legally, but never did happen in any way whatsoever; and was from the beginning a base and malicious falsehood." "Do you speak from authority?" asked Rolle. "I do," replied Fox, "from direct authority." As is now well-known, however, the marriage *had* taken place, and the Prince had simply deceived and betrayed Fox, as he deceived and betrayed so many others. To compromise a friend was nothing, so long as he gained his point. To avoid further discussion of a scandal which might have very serious consequences, Pitt intimated that arrangements satisfactory to the Prince should be made; and on the 14th of May, the House agreed to a vote of £161,000 for the payment of his debts, and of £20,000 for the new works at Carlton House, while the King added £10,000 a year to his income from the Civil List.

The zeal as a Parliamentary Reformer which Pitt had displayed in Opposition, rapidly cooled down after his accession to place and power. It is true that he introduced a feeble measure for the gradual buying up of rotten boroughs,—always with the consent of the borough-mongers,—but he did not back it up with the

ministerial strength, and so the borough-mongers threw it out. He probably thought that, with the country contented, himself at the helm, and a formidable ministerial majority at his back, nothing could be better; but in this, as in some other matters, he showed his inability to rise to the height of a provident and disinterested statesmanship. A large scheme of representative reform would have given the country that confidence in its government and itself which would have enabled it to meet without alarm the shock of the French Revolution. He showed a similar narrowness in his opposition to the proposed Repeal of the Test Act, which pressed as injuriously upon Protestant Dissenters as upon Roman Catholics. "Were we," he said, "to yield on this occasion, the fears of the members of the Church of England would be roused, and their apprehensions are not to be treated lightly. It must, as I contend, be conceded to me that an Established Church is necessary. Now there are some Dissenters who declare that the Church of England is a relic of Popery; others that all Church Establishments are improper. This may not be the opinion of the present body of Dissenters, but no means can be devised of admitting the moderate part of the Dissenters and excluding the violent; the bulwark must be kept up against all." Such were the arguments with which he put aside a measure of the most obvious justice.

We turn with more satisfaction to his conduct in respect to the African Slave-Trade. It was not unworthy, in the earlier years of his ministry, of the son of Chatham. His impulse seems to have been derived

from his friend, William Wilberforce, whose honoured name will always be linked with the cause of Emancipation. Some charges of cruelty having been brought against persons concerned in the African Slave-Trade, Wilberforce was led to investigate the subject fully. "When I had acquired so much information," he says, "I began to talk the matter over with Pitt and Grenville. Pitt recommended me to undertake its conduct as a subject suited to my character and talents. At length, I well remember, after a conversation in the open air, at the root of an old tree at Holwood,* just above the steep descent into the vale of Keston, I resolved to give notice on a fit occasion, in the House of Commons, of my intention to bring the subject forward." Wilberforce was prevented by ill-health from fulfilling his intention, and Pitt supplied his place. On the 9th of May, he moved a resolution, "That this House will, early in the next session, proceed to take into consideration the circumstances of the Slave-Trade." He refrained, however, from offering any decided opinion on the subject. But Fox, untrammelled by official responsibility, at once declared, with the characteristic generosity of his nature, that the Slave-Trade ought not to be regulated, but destroyed. "I have considered the subject very minutely," he added, "and did intend to have brought something forward in the House respecting it. But I rejoice that it should be in the hands of the hon. member for Yorkshire rather than in mine. From him I

* Some fourteen years ago, on a visit to Holwood, we found that this tree was distinguished by a suitable memorial.

honestly think that it will come with more weight, more authority, and more probability of success."

The present generation know nothing of the horrible conditions under which the African Slave-Trade was conducted. They belong to the past, and we have little time to reflect upon things which have ceased to exist except in the pages of the historian. But they rightly moved our fathers to a height of just and noble indignation. It was not possible to hear without emotion of men, women, and children being torn from their homes, consigned in fetters to floating dungeons more ghastly than any of those scenes of torment pictured by the grim imagination of Dante, crowded together until the air they breathed was poisoned by their common exhalations, fed upon the worst and scantiest food, and subjected to the harshest and most brutal treatment. Many perished during the voyage. The sickliest were thrown overboard. If the voyage were unexpectedly prolonged, or if the weather proved unfavourable, the living cargo was lightened without hesitation. Mr. Massey records the case of the ship "Zong," bound from the Guinea coast to Jamaica with a cargo of 442 slaves. Of these 60 died through over-crowding; the supply of fresh water running short, the master flung into the sea 96 of the weakest; subsequently he drowned 26 more; and ten, mad with misery, jumped overboard. This waste of human life excited neither compunction nor astonishment among the merchants and captains engaged in the unholy traffic. Evidence submitted to a committee of the House of Commons showed that the accommodation provided in the slave-ships did not

exceed for each unfortunate a space of $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet by 1 foot 4 inches; that the height between decks varied from 4 feet to 5 feet 8 inches; and that this confined area was fitted with shelves, upon which the living cargo was packed in the same manner as upon deck; that the slaves were chained together by their hands and feet, and fastened by ring-bolts to the decks and shelves; that the daily ration of each man was a pint of water and two feeds of horses' beans; that in the pestiferous atmosphere created by the presence in so confined a space of hundreds of human beings, they were imprisoned for sixteen hours out of the twenty-four; and that the lash was freely used to make them exercise themselves by jumping about in their heavy fetters. It is a sign of the great improvement in the public morality that were such horrors now revealed for the first time, the country would rise with vehement indignation to demand the punishment of their perpetrators. But when Wilberforce and his colleagues brought them before the people of England, some years elapsed before any general feeling of anger or compassion was awakened. When, in the session of 1790, Wilberforce introduced into the House of Commons a Bill "to prevent the further importation of African negroes into the British colonies," and thus to suppress the iniquitous traffic, he was actually defeated, though Pitt and Fox supported him, by a majority of seventy-five.

In a preceding chapter we have touched upon the sad episode of the King's outbreak of insanity in the autumn of 1789, and the political intrigues to which it gave rise. Lord Russell's criticism on the action taken

by the great party-leaders seems to us very just:—Pitt, as the guardian of the rights of the Crown; Fox, as the champion of the rights of the people; the Prince of Wales as a dutiful son; the Queen as an affectionate mother; seem all to have deserted their proper posts, and given but too much reason for censure. The history of the reign of George the 3rd presents many melancholy chapters; but surely that which records the struggle between Pitt and Fox over the Regency Bill is, to those who value the fame and character of England's statesmen, the most melancholy. The just pretensions of the Prince of Wales were put forward by Fox with an imprudence and an extravagance that enabled Pitt to propose a Regency Bill which unduly disregarded them. Still, the conduct of the latter was unquestionably marked by a perception of the supreme authority of Parliament, which Fox for the time seems to have lamentably ignored. The Prime Minister, in a position of great difficulty, behaved with singular courage and calmness. He knew that the Prince's assumption of the Regency would be the signal for his immediate dismissal; but he was not the less firm in dictating what he conceived to be the necessary limitations of his power. And the contest had to be fought by himself alone. He had no powerful political connections; and the only man of mark in his Cabinet was the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, on whom it was impossible to rely.* This able and sagacious, but thoroughly

* "The rugged Thurlow, who, with sullen scowl,
In surly mood at friend and foe will growl;
Of proud prerogative the stern support."

'The Rolliad,' pt. ii., p. 45.

unprincipled lawyer, who, by his brusquerie of manner and roughness of speech, had gained an undeserved reputation for honesty, and made skilful use of it to further his selfish designs, was never true to any person or any cause, if he thought that disloyalty would serve his interests better. At this crisis, he was false to Pitt, and had interviews with Fox, Sheridan, and the Prince himself. "And of all these conversations," writes Lord Grenville, "he never communicated one word to any other member of the Cabinet Pitt," he adds, "has been induced, from his regard to the King, to dissemble his knowledge of Thurlow's conduct, and to suppress the resentment which it so naturally excites." A curious exposure of his treachery, though, indeed, it was previously suspected, took place at the close of a Cabinet Council held at Windsor. The Chancellor's carriage being called, a search was made for his hat, which for some time could not be found. At length one of the pages came running up with the hat in his hand, exclaiming :—"My lord, I found it in the closet of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales." As this announcement was made in the hearing of his colleagues, even Thurlow's brazen effrontery was momentarily shaken.* He began to fear that he was compromising his position; and his uneasiness increased when he found that Dr. Willis, the King's physician, entertained strong hopes of his patient's recovery. He took advantage, therefore, of a debate on the subject which

* Lord Campbell, 'Lives of the Chancellors,' v. 586. A somewhat different version of the incident is given by Sir G. Cornewall Lewis, p. 122.

had arisen in the House of Lords (December 15th), to express his satisfaction that the Prince of Wales disavowed the claim of right which Fox, on the Prince's behalf, had incautiously put forward. He then proceeded to speak of the afflicted condition of the King, in tones melting with pathos, while his eyes overflowed with tears. Recovering himself, he announced his unchangeable resolve to remain true to a sovereign who, for seven-and-twenty years, had faithfully maintained the principles of the Constitution. It was the first duty of that House, he said, to guard the rights of the sovereign in their entirety, so that when Providence restored him to his subjects, he might not find himself in a worse situation than before his illness. After an animated declaration of his feelings of grief and gratitude, he concluded with the fervent apostrophe,—“And when I forget my king, may my God forget me!” The words were caught up “out-of-doors,” spread through the country, and aroused a wonderful display of loyal sympathy among a people unsuspecting and ignorant of the speaker's tergiversation. But on some of the hearers, acquainted with Thurlow's character and conduct, they produced a very different impression. Pitt's disgust was so great, that he rushed from the House, exclaiming, “Oh! the rascal!”* Wilkes, coarsely and bitterly, as was his wont, remarked, “God forget you! He will see you d—d first!” While Burke, less profanely, but not with less severity, muttered, “The best thing that can happen to you!”

* Wraxall, iii. 22. Mr. Massey, on the authority of the Locker MSS., makes Pitt exclaim, “Oh, what a rascal!”

The relative positions taken up by Fox and Pitt are very clearly stated by Sir Erskine May.* Fox hastily put forward the startling doctrine that the Prince of Wales had as clear a right to exercise the power of Sovereignty during the King's incapacity as if the King were dead; and that it was merely for the two Houses of Parliament to pronounce at what time he should commence the exercise of his right. To assert an absolute right of inheritance during his father's life, in defiance of the well-known legal maxim, "*nemo est hæres viventis*," was to argue that the heir-at-law may enter into possession of a lunatic's estate. On the other hand, Pitt maintained that, as no legal provision had been made for carrying on the government, it belonged to Parliament to supply the deficiency. He went so far as even to affirm that, "unless by their decision, the Prince of Wales had no more right, speaking of strict right, to assume the government, than any other individual subject of the country"—a dictum as objectionable as his opponent's. As Earl Russell remarks, the doctrine of Mr. Fox, the popular leader, inclined to set aside the constitutional authority of Parliament, while that of Mr. Pitt, the organ of the Crown, tended to shake the stability of the monarchy, and to peril the great rule of hereditary succession. Allowance should be made, however, for both statesmen, embarrassed as they were by the difficulties of a novel and unforeseen conjuncture; and impelled as they were by the violence of their partisans, who were as eager on the one side to retain, as they were on the other to grasp at, place

* Sir T. Erskine May, 'Constitutional History,' i. 148-151.

and power. Mr. Fox soon became sensible of the mistake he had made in pressing too far the Prince's claim of right, and modified it into a legal claim, contending chiefly that Parliament should impose no restrictions upon the powers of the regent. But here again he was met by Pitt, who argued that any power which was not essential, and might be employed to embarrass the exercise of the King's authority, in the event of his recovery, ought to be withheld. In fact, if Pitt, as he said, "un-Whig"-ed Fox,* it must be admitted that he also "un-Tory"-ed himself. "The conduct of both," says Sir Erskine May, "is easily explained by the circumstances of their respective parties. The Prince had identified himself with Mr. Fox and the Whigs; and it was well known to Mr. Pitt, and offensively announced by his opponents, that the passing of the Regency Act would be the signal for his own dismissal. To assert the Prince's rights, and resist all restrictions upon his authority, was the natural course for his friends to adopt; while to maintain the prerogatives of the Crown,—to respect the feelings and dignity of the Queen, and at the same time to vindicate the paramount authority of Parliament,—was the becoming policy of the King's minister. Mr. Pitt's view, being favourable to popular rights, was supported by the people: Mr. Fox, on the other hand, committed himself to the assertion of prerogative, and inveighed against the discretionary powers of Parliament." †

* "I'll un-Whig the gentleman for the rest of his life."—MOORE, 'Life of Sheridan,' p. 412.

† Sir T. Erskine May, 'Constitutional History,' i. 161, 162.

On the 16th of December (1788), Pitt introduced into the House of Commons three resolutions; the first of which affirmed that the personal exercise of Royal authority was suspended; the second declared the right of the two Houses to supply the defect in such manner as the exigency of the case might seem to require; and the third asserted the necessity of determining the means by which the Royal assent might be given to bills passed by the two Houses respecting the exercise of the powers of the Crown, during the continuance of the King's indisposition. "Fox," says Grenville, writing to his brother* "opposed these resolutions in one of the best speeches I ever heard from him; but I think indiscreetly supporting and enforcing all his old ground of the Prince of Wales's right.† Towards the end, he made a violent personal attack on Pitt, intimating that he was desirous, through envy, to weaken the hands of those *who were to be his successors*. This opening was not neglected by Pitt, but laid hold of in a manner which enabled him to speak of his own conduct towards the King and the Prince; and towards the country in the present moment, and to contrast it with that of his opponents. I never

* 'Courts and Cabinets of George the Third,' ii. 68.

† There is a good deal of truth in Wraxall's criticism:—"I cannot too strongly repeat, that in mental endowments of every kind Fox equalled, if not exceeded, his antagonist. It was Pitt's *superior judgment* and correct life which principally turned in his favour the scale, which retained him in office throughout almost his whole career, while the want of those qualities excluded Fox from office."—'Posthumous Memoirs,' iii. 224. Grattan used to say:—"Mr. Pitt is a discreet man; he is right nine times for once that Mr. Fox is right, but that once of Mr. Fox is worth all the other nine times of Mr. Pitt."—'Memoirs of Thomas Moore,' iv. 215.

heard a finer burst of eloquence, nor witnessed such an impression as it produced." The division gave a majority of 64 to the Ministry. On the report of the resolutions, a debate lasting for two days took place, provoked by an amendment to the second resolution, to the effect that the Prince should be addressed to assume the Government. Sir William Young, writing during the debate, says :—" Edmund Burke arose a little after four, and is speaking yet. He has been wilder than ever, and laid himself and party more open than ever speaker did. He is Folly personified, but shaking his cap and bells under the laurel of genius ; among other things, he said Mr. Pitt's proposals could not be adopted as gentlemen, as *cavaliers* : the word will not be forgot. Fox is present, but looks very ill. Pitt looks recovered. Burke stated the Chancellor [Thurlow] to be like to the god Priapus, and Pitt the carpenter. He ran his idea to a charming extravagance." Next day, Young wrote :—" Sir John Scott [afterwards Lord Eldon] spoke with such learning, truth, and uncommon energy of reasoning and language, that he carried the House with him, and extorted from Lord North, in particular, the highest compliments ever paid to a lawyer in the House of Commons. I never heard Fox speak so temperately, or better in point of argument. Pitt, in reply, was equally great. He stated, to conviction, ' the fiction of the law, which admitted the application of the Royal political authority, when the personal was disabled, as implicated in the very principles of hereditary succession, which otherwise would suffer interruption from nonage, infirmity, dotage, and every contingency in the state of

man.' Sheridan spoke very ill: very hot, injudicious, and *ill-heard*. Rolle, whilst adverting to Sheridan's speech, made use of a remarkable expression, and which seems to hint some future acting up to the recurrence of his purpose. He said that, in proper time, "He should heartily vote for the Prince's being Regent, if the Prince had done no act by which he had forfeited pretensions to executive government in this country. . . . In speaking of our debate, I had forgot Burke, who finished his wild speech in a manner next to madness. He let out two of the new titles—Fitzwilliam to be Marquis of Rockingham, and Lord George Cavendish. . . . His party pulled him, and our friends calling 'Hear, hear,' we lost the rest of the twenty-five new Peers, who would all have come out." Pitt's majority on this occasion rose to 73.

The Minister's next step was to intimate to the Prince of Wales the restrictions he intended to propose. That the care of the royal person and household, and the appointment of officers and servants, should be reserved to the Queen; that the Regent should not be at liberty to dispose of the King's real or personal property, or to grant any office in reversion, or any pension or office, otherwise than during pleasure, except those which were required to be granted for life, or during good behaviour; or to bestow any peerage except upon such of his Majesty's issue as might attain the age of twenty-one.* The Prince's reply, written by Burke, and revised by Sheridan, was ably conceived and finely

* Bishop Tomline, 'Life of Pitt,' ii. 422-425.

expressed.* He regarded the restrictions as a project for producing weakness, disorder, and insecurity in every branch of the administration of affairs; for dividing the members of the royal family from each other; for separating the Court from the State; a scheme disconnecting the authority to command service, from the power of animating it by reward; and for allotting to the Prince all the invidious duties of government, without the means of softening them to the public by any act of grace, favour, or benignity. Pitt, however, persevered. He carried through both Houses resolutions embodying the foregoing conditions, and ultimately the Prince accepted them. A Regency Bill was then introduced into the Commons on the 5th of February (1789); and it passed through its various stages with large majorities. On the 12th of February it was submitted to the Lords. It was read a second time, and taken in committee, when, on the 17th, the Lord Chancellor was able to announce that it would probably be unnecessary to proceed with it on account of the improvement in the King's health. On the 23rd, the King was able to write to Pitt; and on the 26th the physicians issued their last bulletin. Thus terminated a serious and perplexing episode. From a political point of view, Fox had fought a losing battle and displayed indifferent generalship. The victory was un-

* Canning told Moore that he had always thought Sheridan to be the author of this reply, and remembered, though a boy at the time, hearing some passages of it from Sheridan before it appeared; though this might have happened without its being actually written by him. Canning, however, agreed with Moore that it was in a chaster style of composition than Sheridan usually adopted.

questionably with Pitt, whose popularity in the country was increased by his vindication of public rights,* and whose favour with the King was confirmed by his steadfast opposition to any encroachment on the privileges of the Crown. The King's recovery called forth a spontaneous and an enthusiastic manifestation of loyalty. London blazed with light from one extremity to the other; the illuminations extending from Hampstead and Highgate to Clapham, and even to Tooting; while a similar spectacle was presented over all the vast area of houses between Greenwich and Kensington. The poorest mechanics contributed their proportion, and instances were not wanting, says Wraxall, of cobblers' stalls decorated with one or two farthing candles.†

Relieved from the anxieties induced by so critical a struggle, Pitt was at liberty to devote himself to the elaboration of the financial schemes in which his practical intellect was thoroughly at home. He projected a great measure of Free Trade,—the abolition of all Customs Duties, so as to make England the granary and “emporium” of the world, and the restriction of the public income to internal taxation.‡ There is no doubt

* The disinterestedness of his conduct was much admired. It was known that if dismissed from office, he would be reduced to a very limited income; and a proposal was made to raise a subscription of £50,000, or £8000 per annum, which would have been promptly carried out, but for Pitt's declinature.

† The conduct of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York during the King's illness justly elicited expressions of disgust; it was alike unfilial and indecorous. See Madame D'Arblay's 'Diary,' vol. iv.; Earl Russell's 'Memorials of Fox,' vol. ii.; Earl Stanhope's 'Life of Pitt,' vol. ii.

‡ Sir G. Cornewall Lewis, 'British Administrations,' p. 134.

that the promotion of commerce and the reduction of the National Debt were the objects which he had at heart ; and that, therefore, he was by conviction, as also, perhaps, by temperament, a Peace Minister. It will be seen that in the policy of his earlier and happier time he closely sympathised with that of Walpole. His financial schemes were based upon the same principles, his view of the true interests of the country was exactly the same. We may carry the parallelism further. His idea of the Church was as low as Walpole's. He shrank from interfering with its privileges ; but he looked upon it simply as a State institution which helped to guarantee the social order and well-being of the kingdom. He desired to bestow its great offices on men of learning and party ; but he wished also to render them available for strengthening his political influence. Like Walpole, he was in favour of toleration ; but, like Walpole, he hesitated to grant it in opposition to the Church, and, therefore, when he found the bishops, or a majority of fourteen out of sixteen, inimical to the proposed repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, he procured its rejection. Like Walpole, he was willing to grant full liberty to the Press, and he gave his support to the reform of the Libel Law. But again, like Walpole, he was no patron of literature or of literary men. His neglect called forth the reproach of a contemporary satirist :—*

“ Pitt views alike, from Holwood's sullen brow,†
(As near-observing friendship dares avow,)

* Matthias, ‘Pursuits of Literature,’ pt. ii.

† Pitt acquired the small estate of Holwood Hill, near Hayes, in 1785.

The fount of Pindus or Bœotia's bog,
With nothing of Mæcenæ but his frog.*
—More spleen to Pitt; he's liberal, but by stealth.
—Yes, and he spares a nation's inborn wealth,
Another Adam in economy;
For all, but Burke, escape his searching eye.
Stiff from old Turgot and his rigid school,
He never deviates from his wholesome rule:
'Left to themselves, all find their level price,
Potatoes, verses, turnips, Greek, and rice.'"

Lord Stanhope, Pitt's best, because his fairest, apologist, admits that the charge is well-founded. In some cases, he adds, it is no doubt very easy to offer an adequate defence. In the case of Porson, for instance, it must be owned that his intemperate habits, no less than his democratic views, unfitted him for preferment, notwithstanding his remarkable erudition. But in the case of many others, as, for example, the poet Cowper, no such plea can be alleged. It is true that Burns received an exciseman's place; but the gift came from Dundas, not Pitt. We are not of those, however, who think that Literature flourishes most strongly when sunned by a minister's smile; and we are content to accept Mr. Goldwin Smith's apology—"How can a statesmen have leisure to discriminate literary merit? And if he cannot discriminate, how can we desire that he should patronise? Of course he can be told what writers are on his own side in politics, and he can see who flatter him in the prefaces; but this is not what learning or the public wants. A munificent despot, such as Lewis the 14th, may foster a Court literature; a munificent party-chief,

* The seal which Mæcenæ attached to edicts for the collection of taxes had the figure of a frog.

such as the Whig leader in the reign of Anne, may foster a party literature. A healthy literature needs no fostering but that of freedom." On the other hand, we are free to confess that the relations of Peel and Gladstone to men of letters have been more honourable to themselves, and certainly less prejudicial to the interests of literature, than those of Walpole and Pitt.

In the courage with which Pitt withstood opposition, in the tact with which he managed the House of Commons, in his attention towards the Court and Crown, in the faculty he possessed of detecting the right moment when to yield or when to maintain his ground, we see a resemblance to the great Minister of the two first Georges. We could fancy Walpole replying, as Pitt replied, to the question what quality was most required in a Prime Minister,—when one said Eloquence, and another Knowledge, and a third Toil,—“No, Patience.”* For of Walpole's success, as of Pitt's, the secret was Patience, the patience of a clear strong intellect, a cool judgment, and a resolute will. But while drawing the parallel thus closely, we do not wish to forget that Pitt, as a man, has claims to our respect which Walpole cannot put forward. We would not omit to do justice to the purity of his life, to his unblemished personal integrity, to the goodness and gentleness of his temper, and to the sincerity of his religious belief. These qualities imparted to his public conduct an elevation which we do not perceive in that of Walpole; and, reflecting upon them, we may

* Lord Brougham, ‘Historical Sketches of British Statesmen,’ i. 278.

well be disposed to judge with leniency of his political errors.*

* "There was a singular contrast in the life of Lord Chatham and that of his son. The first Pitt was essentially a war minister, he seemed to require the sound of the clarion and the trumpet and the guns proclaiming victory from the Tower, to call forth the force and instincts of his genius. In peace he became an ordinary person. The second Pitt, on the contrary, was as evidently a peace minister. In quiet times his government had, been eminently successful. Orderly, regular, methodical, with a firm and lofty soul, and the purest motives for his guides, he had carried on the business of the country, steadily, prudently, and ably—heedless of the calumnies of envy, or the combinations of factions [surely few Ministers have met with so little "factions" opposition as Pitt!]: but he wanted that imagination which furnishes resources in unexpected occasions. The mighty convulsion which made the world heave under his feet did not terrify him, but it bewildered him: and nothing could be more unfortunate, or even more wavering, than his conduct when he had to deal with extraordinary events."—LORD DALLING, 'Historical Characters,' ii. 242.

NOTES.

P. 37, note. Professor Smyth very justly defends the Whig families, that is, the English aristocracy (with few exceptions) as it existed during the reigns of George the 1st and George the 2nd. "Consider it," he says, "in all its functions, relations, opinions, feelings: a nobility who were graced with privileges and honours; armed with property and power; who had placed the reigning family on the throne, but who had done this on popular principles; who were thus bound to the king, but were also pledged to the people; who were connected to the sovereign by the enjoyment and expectation of titles and offices, and yet united to the people, first, by a common resistance to an arbitrary power, then by common laws, common maxims and opinions, religious and political, mutual respect, common interests of property and security; and were even allied and interwoven into the mass of their fellow-citizens by mingling, through the medium of their dearest relations, in the democratic branch of the legislature. A more favourable situation of things could not well be supposed by the most sanguine speculator on the social union of mankind. The misfortune would undoubtedly be, that even this aristocracy might not be sufficiently jealous of the prerogative of the crown, but sufficiently alive to the claims and rights of the subject. But, on the whole, a considerable approach would be made to secure, in a peaceful and steady manner, the main interests of all the constituent parts of the community."—*Lectures on Modern History*, ii. 344.

P. 47, line 20. "*Mentiris impudentissime.*" This phrase occurs in Pascal's Letters.

P. 78, line 6 from the bottom. For "*Ephraim*," read "*Epicure*."

P. 105, line 6 from the bottom. For "*Charlotte*," read "*Caroline*."

P. 111, note. In 1725 Walpole revived the Order of the Bath, and was one of the first to receive the red riband. This suggested the following epigram:—

Quoth Sir Robert, "Our Ribands, I find, are too few,—
Of St. Andrew's, the green, and St. George's, the blue :
I must find out a red one, a colour more gay—
That will tie up my subjects with pride to obey.
Though the 'Chequer may suffer by prodigal donors,
Yet the King's ne'er exhausted, that fountain of honours."

P. 121, line 6 from the bottom. Doddington (afterwards Lord Melcombe) has drawn his own character, in singularly vivid, but certainly not flattering colours, in his 'Diary,' which was published by Penruddock Wyndham twelve years after his death (in 1784). See also Horace Walpole's 'Memoirs of the last Ten Years of George the 2nd' (vol. i., App.). He figures in Hogarth's 'Five Orders of Periwigs' (the first head in the second row); hence Churchill's allusion:—

"There, over Melcombe's feather'd head,—
Who, quite a man of gingerbread,
Savour'd in talk, and dress, and phiz,
More of another world than this."

('The Ghost,' iv. 632, 636).

Churchill's references to him are always contemptuous, as, for instance, in his 'Independence':—

"To think a Melcombe worth my least regards,
Is treason to the majesty of bards."

P. 123, line 5 from the bottom. For "Archbishop Porter," read "Archbishop Potter."

P. 126, line 18. Pulteney's loss of popular influence was commemorated by Sir C. Hanbury Williams in the following epigram:—

Written on the Earl of Bath's Door.
Here, dead to fame, lives patient Will,
His grave a lordly seat;
His title proves his epitaph,
His robes his winding-sheet.

Hanbury Williams also parodied Pope's epitaph on Secretary Craggs:—

Pulteney, no friend to truth, in fraud sincere,
In act unfaithful, and from honour clear;
Who broke his promise, served his private ends,
Who gain'd a title, and who lost all friends;

Dishonour'd by himself, by none approv'd,
Curs'd, scorn'd, and hated, ev'n by those he lov'd.

P. 143, line 7 from the bottom. For "impar congressu Achilli," read "impar congressus Achilli."

P. 205, line 10. In 'Notes and Queries' for 1877 will be found an interesting discussion of this once-celebrated ghost story, satisfactorily establishing its fictitious character.

P. 210, line 4 from the bottom. The name of "Lothario" may perhaps be traced to an earlier Italian story.

P. 210, line 10 from the bottom. De Quincey thinks it doubtful whether Wilkes was really the author of the 'Essay on Woman.'

P. 257, line 16. Jeffrey, when his criticism went beyond the *belles lettres*, often passed very fallible judgments, and surely one such was his depreciatory estimate of Chatham. "I have always had an impression," he says, (though perhaps an ignorant and unjust one), "that there was more good luck than wisdom in his foreign policy, and very little to admire, except his general purity, in any part of his domestic administration." Does "good luck" ever happen to any but men of genius?

P. 257, last line but one. Read 'would not throw them down.' The reference is to an incident which occurred in a debate in the House of Commons on the French Revolution, when Burke drew from his pocket and flung on the floor a small dagger, numbers of which, he said, were being manufactured for distribution among the disaffected classes in England.

P. 266, line 6 from the bottom. For "Burke," read "Brooke."

P. 268. To the authorities cited in the note may be added Niebuhr, the German historian, who always refers to Burke as his political teacher.

P. 268, add to note. In Wordsworth's opinion, Burke was by far the greatest man of his age; not only abounding in knowledge himself, but feeding, in various directions, his most able contemporaries; assisting Adam Smith in his 'Political Economy,' and Reynolds in his 'Lectures on Painting.'—'Memoirs of Thomas Moore,' ed. by Earl Russell, iii. 162.

P. 280. In transcribing from our note-book, we have accidentally given as a quotation from the Essay 'On the Cause of the Present Discontent,' a

sentence which really occurs in the 'Thoughts on the French Revolution' (the sentence beginning "We have not relegated," etc.).

P. 292, line 14, and elsewhere. For "Malton," read "Maldon."

P. 306, line 5. Moore and Rogers talked one day of the impeachment of Hastings, and Moore jotted down in his Diary these notes of the conversation:—"Asked Rogers whether it was not now looked upon, even by the Opposition themselves, as a sort of dramatic piece of display, got up by the Whigs of that day from private pique, vanity, etc., etc.; Francis, first urging them on from his hostility to Hastings; Burke running headlong into it from impetuosity of temper; and Sheridan seizing with avidity the first great opportunity that offered of showing his talent. He said it was so considered now [1818]; and in addition to all this, Mr. Pitt gave in to the prosecution with much satisfaction, because it turned away the embattled talent of the time from himself and his measures, and concentrated it all against this one individual, whom he was most happy to sacrifice, could he thereby keep them employed. Burke's admiration of Sheridan's second speech on the Begums; he said, 'That is the true style; something neither prose nor poetry, but better than either.' It was the opinion of Mr. Fox that Burke's style altered after he heard this speech, and that to the taste he acquired from it we owe the extreme floridness of his writings afterwards."—"Memoirs of Thomas Moore," ed. by Earl Russell, ii. 191, 192.

P. 321, line 9. It must be admitted, however, that to such widely opposed minds as Robert Hall, the Baptist minister, and Gibbon, the war appeared of a religious character, from the anti-Christian tendencies of some of the elements in the French Revolutionary movement.

P. 324. With reference to the quarrel between Burke and Fox, the following passage is interesting:—"Adair [Sir Robert Adair, Fox's friend, and at one time Ambassador at Vienna and Constantinople] told me a great deal about the quarrel between Fox and Burke. Fox never ceased to entertain a regard for Burke, and at no time would suffer him to be abused in his presence. There was an attempt made to bring about a reconciliation, and a meeting for that purpose took place of all the leading men at Burlington House. Burke was on the point of yielding, when his son suddenly made his appearance unbidden, and, on being told what was going on, said, 'My father shall be no party to such a compromise,' took Burke aside, and persuaded him to reject the overture. That son Adair described as the most disagreeable, violent, and wrong-headed of men, but the idol of his father, who used to say that he united all his own talents

and acquirements with those of Fox and everybody else. After the death of Richard Burke, Fox and Burke met behind the throne of the House of Lords one day, when Fox went up to Burke, and put out both his hands to him. Burke was almost surprised into meeting this cordiality in the same spirit, but the momentary impulse passed away, and he doggedly dropped his hands, and left the House."—"The Greville Memoirs," i. 136, 137.

P. 346, note. Lord Erskine's opinions upon Fox's oratory and policy will be found in a letter prefixed to Wright's edition of the Whig leader's speeches.

P. 355, line 7 from the bottom. *For l'interrer," read "le déterrer."*

P. 377. Of Lord North's good-tampered repartees another example may be given. Mr. Thomas Townshend, a speaker of much violence and equal ignorance, said, on one occasion, in the course of debate:—"Nothing will satisfy me but to have the noble lord's head; I will have his head." Lord North replied:—"The honourable gentleman says he will have my head. I bear him no malice in return; for though the honourable gentleman says he will have my head, I can assure him that I would on no account have his."

P. 397, line 20. That Fox carried his *bonhomie* into the serious concerns of life is apparent from an anecdote related by Haydon. Writing in his *Diary*, August 21st, 1833, the painter says:—"Mr. Coke told me a story of Charles Fox. One night at Brookes's, he made some remark on government powder, in allusion to something that happened. Adams considered it a reflection and sent Fox a challenge. Fox went out, and took his station, giving a full front. Fitzgerald said, 'You must stand sideways.' Fox said, 'Why, I am as thick one way as the other.' 'Fire!' was given—Adams fired, Fox did not; and when they said he must, he said, 'I'll be damned if I do. I have no quarrel.' They then advanced to shake hands. Fox said, 'Adams, you'd have killed me if it had not been government powder.' The ball hit him in the groin, and fell into his breeches."—"Life of B. R. Haydon," ii. 342. We may take another anecdote from the same source:—"Mr. Coke said Fox was as fond of shooting as a schoolboy. He went out one morning. It came on to rain. Fox stood under some firs with a gamekeeper, who was a great talker. All the day it rained incessantly. As the ladies were all waiting dinner, in came Fox. 'Where have you been, Charles?' said Mr. Coke. 'Why, talking to that fellow all day. There is hardly a man I can't get something from if he talks,' said Mr. Fox."

P. 398, line 26. The second of these enigmas has been attributed to Dean Swift. It is frequently printed in the following form :—

“ Form’d long ago, yet made to-day,
Employ’d while others sleep ;
What few would wish to give away,
And fewer wish to keep.”

P. 435, line 5. Lord Lansdowne told Moore that he had heard from his father (the Earl of Shelburne), that, one day, in calling on Lord Chat-ham, he found he had been setting his son, Pitt, to make an abstract of Whitelock’s Memorial as a task.—‘*Memoirs of Thomas Moore*,’ ed. by Earl Russell, iv. 159.

P. 448, line 6 from the bottom. *For* “*Fan*,” *read* “*Face*.”

P. 452. *Erskine and Pitt*. Pitt seems to have cherished an antipathy against Erskine, which frequently manifested itself. On one occasion, when the latter had followed Fox in a long speech, Pitt said :—“ The learned gentleman has followed his Right Honourable Leader, running along the line of his argument, and, as usual, attenuating it as he went.”—‘*Memoirs of Thomas Moore*,’ ed. by Earl Russell, iv. 25.

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